EAST BAY EXPRESS

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ECO WATCH 8

A Park Grows In Richmond

How one woman is trying to improve life in a tough city playground by playground. —By Erin Gilmore

CULTURE SPY 23

AUDACITY AND HOPE

Despite the abrupt cancellation of last year's event, Berkeley's long-running Juneteenth Festival soldiers on.

NEWS 12

THE RETURN TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A growing number of families are making the switch from private schools

By [illegible] Levin

For eight years, Joanna Berg and her husband spent $40,000 every year to send their two sons to Head-Royce, a private K-12 college-prep school in Oakland. Berg, who grew up attending private schools in San Francisco, had never considered sending her kids to Oakland public schools — and it wasn't financially necessary. But when Berg's eldest son, Jason, expressed unhappiness with the culture at Head-Royce, Berg and her husband, who live in Montclair, decided to transfer him to Oakland Technical High School. "I was phenomenally impressed," Berg said. "I kind of can't believe I ever paid so much."

Story continues

THEATER 34

THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT

Shotgun Players' *Faust* is a Gothic bromance with a beguiling devil.

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Tech Talk

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At&t Wireless Announces 3G Upgrade, Plans for 4G Evolution

by Mielle Sullivan, Janus Networks

At&t announced last week that big advancements are on the way for its wireless service. By the end of the year users will have stronger indoor coverage and download speeds twice as fast as what they currently experience.
"With the array of smartphones, laptops and emerging devices taking advantage of AT&T's 3G network today we know that customers are excited to experience higher mobile broadband speeds, and we are deploying the right technologies at the right times to help them get the most from that experience," said Ralph de la Vega, the President and CEO of At&t Mobility and Consumer Markets

Currently AT&T uses a technology called High Speed Downlink Packet Access/ Universal Mobile Telephone System (HSDPA/UMTS) with typical download speeds of 700-1 7 Mbit/sec The upgrade will be to the similar but more evolved High Speed Packet Access (HSPA) 7.2 wireless technology HSPA 7.2 has theoretical download speeds of 7.2 Mbits – or about 1 megabyte – per second However At&t admits that real world speeds will be significantly slower

To increase the reach of its network and deliver stronger indoor service the carrier also plans to nearly double the 850 MHz spectrum it has dedicated to high-speed wireless. 2 100 cell site connections will be added across the country to achieve this goal Dropped calls and spotty service are chief complaints among At&t's customer base Stronger reception may improve the company's reputation and lure more customers.

Even bigger plans are on the way for 2010 when At&t will begin testing LTE or Long Term Evolution wireless technology LTE is a contender for the 4G standard and is similar to WiMax. But LTE is less open, more proprietary and currently faster than WiMax – all of which has contributed to wider adoption among carriers. In a few years some analysts believe LTE and WiMax could advance to compete with wired broadband If that happens it wouldn't just be a wireless evolution but rather a second wireless revolution and At&t could be poised at the front.

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On the Cover *Toody Maher Photo by Chris Duffey.*

EAST BAY EXPRESS

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NEWS & OPINION

LETTERS

Jazz Is Today's Rock

Jazz musicians aren't exactly trying to "stave off extinction." Jazz is today's rock. The truly inventive musicians, such as Michael Coleman, are working in it. The lack of coverage of jazz and the tendency of jazz writers to ignore any mode of jazz but the workhorses and any performers but the mainstream are why jazz suffers. But even so, jazz is thriving, though largely in the smaller venues and at private house parties.

David Kaye, San Francisco

Graywater Systems Gain Ground, Eco Watch

Not the Greatest Investment

I hate to be one to throw a bucket of cold water on Eco Watch's enthusiastic report on the graywater systems being offered by WaterSprout, but I think most consumers with an eye on the bottom line will discover these systems require too much cash upfront to deliver a reasonable return on investment. This is why the cheaper, non-code compliant (illegal) graywater systems are proliferating — some owners seem to be willing to trade off health and safety concerns for low cost.

Everyone agrees that saving water is important, even critical, and an all around good thing to do for the planet. Here's how I do the math. Using WaterSprout's numbers, a homeowner with a family of four can conserve approximately 14,000 gallons of water a year by harvesting and storing rainwater, filtering it with sand, and distributing it to the garden — all at an average cost of $7,000.00. The average cost of water for EBMUD users these days is $10.37 for every 748 gallons of water used. This system will save the average homeowner $194.00 per year on their water bill and pay for itself in just about 36 years. A 36-year return on investment will not be very compelling for most homeowners.

How about this example instead: A homeowner with a family of four replaces their 2.5gpm shower head with a new eco-friendly 1.5gpm shower head. The latest products from folks like Evolve make a great shower head, as do others. In this example, using EBMUD's average time estimate of an 8.9 minute shower length per person, the family of four will save 11,825 gallons of water per year, and will save $164.00 on their water bill! The Lani Marymor Company sells the Evolve shower head for $45.00 — return on investment — less than 4 months.

Just to drive the point home, let's say the same family also replaces their old 3.5 gallon flush toilet with a new eco-friendly 1.28 gallon flush HET (High Energy Technology) model. They're going to save approximately 19,447 gallons of water per year and knock another $270.00 off their water bill — not to mention the $150.00 rebate that EBMUD will contribute toward the cost of the new toilet purchase. Toilets and installation costs vary from plumber to plumber, but this water strategy is bound to break even in less than two years.

I think graywater is great, but it should be obvious that replacing shower heads and toilets is way more cost efficient and represents the "low hanging fruit" in green plumbing technology.

If your readers want to calculate how much money they can save on their own water bills by upgrading to eco-friendly shower heads and toilets, they can use the "Water Savings Calculator" found at LaniMarymor.com/green.html

Leigh Marymor, certified green builder
Lani Marymor, Emeryville

[illegible] Same Sex Days 5/13

A Smoky Slippery Slope

First, it was the argument that gay marriages would bring a bonanza in tax money to California in marriage licenses and gay tourism; now, it is the legalization of marijuana. I have a better idea: Legalize robbery. The more money the robber gets in a holdup, the more money the state gets in taxes. Also taxing stolen cars, the robber keeps the car after paying the taxes to the state. Imagine the amount of money that'd be saved in police services. Since we're at it, let's also legalize the "Interspecies Marriage Act" that would allow a woman to marry her dog or a man to marry his goat. Another bonanza of tax money for the state!

It is this bunch of cowardly and degenerate politicians from the Bay Area, as well as the constituents who elect them to serve in Sacramento, who are coming with this kind of nutty proposals like the ones in the May 19 election, because of their cowardliness to tax the corporations that do business in California.

Leo T. West, San Leandro

Better Than Alcohol

If health outcomes determined drug laws instead of cultural norms, marijuana would be legal. Unlike alcohol, marijuana has never been shown to cause an overdose death, nor does it share the addictive properties of tobacco. Like any drug, marijuana can be harmful if abused, but jail cells are inappropriate as health interventions and ineffective as deterrents.

The first marijuana laws were enacted in response to Mexican immigration during the early 1900s, despite opposition from the American Medical Association. Dire warnings that marijuana inspires homicidal rages have been counterproductive at best. White Americans did not even begin to smoke pot until a soon-to-be entrenched federal bureaucracy began funding reefer madness propaganda.

Marijuana prohibition has failed miserably. The US has higher rates of marijuana use than the Netherlands, where marijuana is legally available to adults over 18. The only clear winners in the war on marijuana are drug cartels and shameless tough-on-drugs politicians who've built careers confusing drug prohibition's collateral damage with a relatively harmless plant.

The following Virginia Law Review article provides a good overview of the cultural roots of marijuana legislation: http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/Library/studies/vlr/vlrtoc.htm

United Nations drug stats: http://www.unodc.org/

July 2008 World Health Organization survey study: http://medicine.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pmed.0050141&ct=1&SESSID=fe904500fb9979c0691963e9fb373b0b

A comparative analysis of US vs. European rates of drug use can be found at

http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/espad_pr.pdf. MTF is funded with US government grants.

Comparative analysis of US vs. Dutch rates of drug use: http://www.drugwarfacts.org/thenethe.htm

Robert Sharpe, policy analyst
Common Sense for Drug Policy, Washington, DC

Don't Cage Me, Man

A sane and moral argument to continue caging humans for using the plant cannabis (hemp/marijuana) doesn't exist. Caging humans for using cannabis can only be rationalized based upon personality disorders associated with bigotry, racism, or discrimination. It's time to RE-legalize cannabis throughout North America.

Stan White, Dillon, Colorado

Correction

In the June 3 music pick on Nancy Wilson, we misstated when she signed with Capitol Records. It was during the 1960s.

Letters Policy

Please provide your full name, address, and daytime phone number, although we will only print your name, city, and affiliation. Send submissions to Letters@EastBayExpress.com or Letters, *East Bay Express*, 1335 Stanford Ave, Suite 100, Emeryville, CA 94608. Letters are edited for length and clarity.

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RAISING THE BAR

THOSE CRAZY BANKERS ARE LIONS EATING ZEBRAS

Too bad we are the zebras

By J. Youngdahl

Perhaps no industry in our lifetime has disintegrated as fast as American banking. In the last year we have seen that playing with money in a virtual world of finance has real, tangible results. The consequences in housing and other sectors continue to unfold. And now the jefes of banking are taking it out on their lower-level employees.

The number of financial jobs in the East Bay has dropped by 4,500 in the past year. Wells Fargo, which in April recorded a record first-quarter profit, just announced the layoffs of about 150 in San Leandro and a cut in pension benefits for the employees that remain. Of course, many honest people who worked in the mortgage industry are suffering, too.

Surprisingly, in his recent book *A Failure of Capitalism: The Crisis of '08 and the Descent into Depression*, one of the leading lights of conservative business ideology, Judge Richard A. Posner of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, indicts the system. This free-marketer now believes in — horrors — financial regulation. "We are learning," Posner writes, "that we need a more active and intelligent government to keep our model of a capitalist economy from running off the rails." Milton Friedman, who is probably hanging out in the Buddhist realm of the "hungry ghosts," must be livid.

Posner absolves the individuals involved in the virtual banking collapse. "I do not think they can be blamed for it — implying moral censure — any more than one can blame a lion for eating a zebra," he states. Economist John Kenneth Galbraith once argued the opposite, maintaining that the financiers are motivated by personal selfishness. "A person's highest duty, it holds, is to his own income. This attitude is a powerful attack on the least fortunate of our citizens." I think that both are right: there is systemic and personal greed at work.

The dialectic of the personal and the systemic can be seen in the current Chrysler bankruptcy. A number of Posner's lions, led by a 39-year-old hedge-fund manager, George Schultze, thought they could make quick money by speculating on Chrysler's debt. Using other people's money, Schultze and his fellow "vulture" investors tried to extract money from Chrysler by buying unsecured company bonds, thinking they could flip them for a king's ransom. Naming themselves the "Committee of Chrysler Non-Tarp Lenders," they hired lawyers to represent them in bankruptcy court but cowardly refused to divulge their identities. Their move was so bold, however, that not even the bankruptcy judge could go for it. Appropriately, they then got named, shamed, and blamed.

Due to the multitude of financial claims from many sources including retired autoworkers and local dealers, it soon became obvious that Schultze and his committee had miscalculated. The lions were outraged and started roaring. "Coincidentally," at the same time, an unsourced article with no byline appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* claiming that in the future bankers were going to be unwilling to loan any money to unionized companies or companies who had any commitments to retirees. The obvious message was that zebras had better keep their mouths shut or the lions would pounce. However, when his committee crumbled, Schultze had to come clean. In an article on Bloomberg.com, he openly made his greedy claims, blaming the retired assembly-line workers for his travails.

I am continually startled to hear people from an industry that collapsed so spectacularly through its own avarice blame everyone around them. Given the billions in bailout money to the financial industry and the pain and misery that is cascading throughout society, you would think that these guys would have some shame. But this is not the case. A couple months ago, the head of one of the largest financial entities, the Carlyle Group, tried to put some responsibility on all of us for the financial meltdown, exclaiming that "there are six billion people on the face of the earth, and probably about five billion participated in what went on." Huh?

The maneuvering in the current Chrysler bankruptcy shows that the financial class still thinks regular Americans are their zebras. To blame the assembly-line workers at Chrysler for the ills of their company is outrageous. And to denigrate health care for these retirees is inhuman. For decades, Chrysler workers literally fought to force the company to pay them wages and benefits that would bring them into the middle class. They succeeded. As health-care costs began to rise, the workers, through their union, traded wage increases and other benefits for a promise that the company would pay health costs for them when they retired.

Isn't keeping one's promise a part of American values? But each time Chrysler was sold, the financiers who took money out of the company left inadequate reserves to fulfill the promise. It appears that, for a variety of mostly political reasons, the retirees may be able to keep some of these promises, but only a fraction. And East Bay Chrysler dealers in Oakland and Livermore will be completely forced out of business.

Activists are starting to put the heat on bankers, as they should. In Chicago recently, two hundred mostly Hispanic workers at the Republic window factory occupied their plant and put the heat squarely on Bank of America when the company closed due to the bank restricting credit. The bank was unable to hide behind company management and a campaign of political pressure forced the bankers to back up. It now appears that the plant is going to reopen as a green window factory. A similar struggle is underway at Hart Schaffner Marx, the preferred suit provider of President Obama. And in spite of the support that California's big public pension funds still give to Schultze's industry, a number of pension and health and welfare funds are starting to take on the raw greed of the financiers, arguing that a sustainable long-term investment strategy must be developed that does not rely on financial exotics.

Like Posner says, beasts cannot be housebroken. I guess lions should never be let out of their cages. ◆

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JUDGE CALLS BART COP A LIAR

C. Don Clay says he's sure Johannes Mehserle meant to shoot Oscar Grant with his gun, and not his Taser as the ex-BART cop claimed.

By Robert Gammon

Judges usually don't refer to murder defendants as liars in public before a case goes to trial. But that's essentially what happened last week when Alameda County Superior Court Judge C. Don Clay told ex-BART cop Johannes Mehserle that he didn't believe that he accidentally shot and killed an unarmed Oscar Grant in the back while he lay on the ground. "There is no doubt in my mind that Mr. Mehserle intended to shoot Oscar Grant with a gun and not a Taser," the judge declared in open court, referring to the cop's claim that he meant to Tase Grant, not fatally shoot him. Clay then ordered Mehserle to stand trial on murder charges.

Although the judge's statement was unusual, it wasn't surprising. After an extended pretrial hearing, it was clear that Mehserle and several of his colleagues had serious credibility problems. Testimony revealed that after the New Year's Day killing, Mehserle repeatedly told another BART officer that he thought Grant was reaching for a gun — and never once said that he had meant to Tase him, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The judge noted that as a trained police officer, Mehserle would not have attempted to Tase Grant if he actually believed he posed a deadly threat. In the end, the testimony was pretty damning for Mehserle, and it looks as if he would be better off attempting to strike a plea deal with prosecutors than putting his fate in the hands of a jury, who will surely watch the videotapes of the fatal shooting over and over again.

Mehserle's buddy, BART cop Anthony Pirone, also should make sure he has plenty of lawyers around. Both Pirone and Mehserle testified that Grant had refused to put his hands behind him, but then Pirone was forced to admit that videotapes of the shooting showed Grant doing just that. Pirone also testified that Grant had kicked him in the groin moments before the killing. But according to the *Chron*, Pirone then admitted that he never told investigators about the alleged kick during at least two interviews in the days after the killing. Pirone said he only remembered the kick later, after viewing videotapes of the incident — which, it should be noted, do not show any such kick.

Meanwhile, Pirone's partner, Marysol Domenici, also appears to have problems telling the truth. She testified that Grant grabbed her arm just before Pirone forced Grant to the ground. But once again, numerous videotapes of the incident don't show Grant grabbing anyone. Domenici and Pirone also blamed Grant for his own death, saying he would still be alive if he had done everything they asked. But that raised more questions about them than him, particularly about whether they remain fit for service. In essence, the BART cops had justified killing a suspect who resists arrest.

And finally, there's BART police Chief Gary Gee. His department clearly mishandled the shooting investigation, and he's responsible as the person in charge. Based on what was said on the stand, it's hard to justify Gee's decision to not fire Pirone and Domenici. But that's just the start of Gee's problems. According to the *Chron*, the chief is under fire for ordering new shoulder patches for his cops' uniforms with the word "BART" removed. The new patches simply say "Police," surrounded by a barely readable "Bay Area Rapid Transit" spelled out in very small letters. In other words, Gee apparently is attempting to downplay whom the cops actually work for. The agency, which is facing a huge deficit and plans to raise fares next month, spent $2,500 on the new patches. BART board member Lynette Sweet called the move "one of the stupidest things I've heard."

Good and Bad News for Jerry Brown

A new poll on the 2010 governor's race shows that state Attorney General Jerry Brown is leading San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa for the Democratic Party nomination. The Probolsky Research/*Capitol Weekly* Poll showed that Oakland's former mayor would receive 24 percent of the vote compared to Newsom's 16 percent and Villaraigosa's 15 percent if the election were held now. But it'll be interesting to see if the latest controversy surrounding Brown will affect those numbers. The *Sacramento Bee* reported that Brown accepted nearly $90,000 in campaign contributions from the family of powerhouse lobbyist Darius Anderson, whose company the state Attorney General's Office is now investigating. The *Bee* also reported that Republican gubernatorial candidate Steve Poizner jumped on the ethics scandal immediately, calling on Brown to return the donations, saying that the attorney general was engaging in "unethical conduct" by keeping contributions from the family of a man his office is investigating. A spokesperson for Brown, who has decried the negative effects of campaign contributions on politics in the past, said the attorney general has no plans to return the money.

Three-Dot Roundup

The San Francisco 49ers' plan to move south got a big boost last week when the Santa Clara City Council approved the proposal. The Niners also want the Oakland Raiders to move with them, hoping that it will be easier for two teams to finance a new $937 million stadium. According to the *Chron*, Raiders CEO Amy Trask has expressed interest in the stadium-sharing proposal, but would prefer that the two teams work on a new stadium plan for Oakland. ... But that seems like a long shot, considering the deep economic downturn, the city's staggering budget deficit, and the fact that West Oakland just got its first grocery store last week. As for the Oakland City Council, it seems preoccupied with offering municipal IDs for illegal immigrants. ... Maybe Berkeley would be interested. Mayor Tom Bates said last week that his city is in remarkably good financial shape. And now that the university has cut down all those trees, maybe there's also room for the Raiders? ●

Seven Days is culled from our news blog, 92510, which you can find at EastBayExpress.com/Blogs.

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ECO WATCH

PROTECTING THE WATER WASTERS

East Bay MUD says it won't divulge the identities of its biggest water users out of fear for their safety. Environmentalists say their position is laughable.

By Robert Gammon

Water agencies like to tout themselves as stewards of the environment. The East Bay Municipal Utility District is no exception. The Oakland-based agency brags about its eco-friendly programs from water recycling to turning bio-waste into clean energy. But in reality, East Bay MUD most often views itself as a business whose primary mission is to take care of its best customers, i.e. its biggest water users. So it should come as no surprise that the agency has refused a request by this newspaper to reveal the identities of its largest water users and how much water they consume. Never mind that many of these residents and businesses have likely wasted huge amounts of water during the drought, while putting the agency on a path toward building a new dam on the scenic Mokelumne River. According to East Bay MUD, its customers' right to privacy is paramount.

The agency denied a similar request by the *Oakland Tribune* in the early 1990s during the last drought. *The Tribune* then sued under the California Public Records Act and won. An Alameda County judge ruled in 1991 that the public's right to know who was wasting water in a drought outweighed the water wasters' privacy rights. According to news reports from the time, the lawsuit revealed that the largest water users consumed a whopping 4,000 gallons of water a day and most of them lived in the Danville-Alamo area.

But then in 1997 the legislature passed an amended the state records law, allowing certain agencies to restrict the release of such records. The move came in response to the murder of a woman whose assailant found her address in Department of Motor Vehicle records. The amendment states that public utilities such as East Bay MUD can keep the names and addresses of its customers private if they wish. But the amendment also states that public utilities are free to release such records if they determine that "the public interest in disclosure of the information clearly outweighs the public interest in nondisclosure."

In this case, the *Express* is not asking for the names and addresses of all of East Bay MUD's 1.3 million customers, but only of the agency's 100 biggest water users by category, including single-family homes and multi-family residences. The paper believes the public has a right to know who is guzzling water in a drought, and is not interested in the agency's entire database. But in denying the request, East Bay MUD official Rischa Cole cited the murder case and indicated that the agency was concerned about the safety of its largest water users should their names become public. When asked whether the agency believed that environmentalists or dam opponents posed a threat to these users, Cole declined to answer.

Elephant wearing striped Pants, Flickr CC

Whose sprinkler is working overtime?

When told of the agency's response, some environmentalists and opponents of the planned Mokelumne River dam said the idea that they would harm large water users was laughable. "That's kind of out there, isn't it?" said Pete Bell of the Foothill Conservancy, a nonprofit dedicated to protecting the Mokelumne in the Sierra Foothills. "Are we going to go protest in front of a large water user?" Bell added. "I seriously doubt it. I've got better and more productive things to do with my time."

So is East Bay MUD really worried about its customers' safety? Or is the agency more concerned about its bottom line? After all, the embarrassment that can come with public disclosure might convince some of the agency's best customers to change their ways. But that would result in East Bay MUD selling less water and thus receiving less revenue.

Because East Bay MUD is refusing to answer questions about the issue, one can only speculate as to its true rationale. But financial concerns appear to be a driving force for the agency, because it also refused to disclose the names and addresses of its largest business and industrial water users. Why would East Bay MUD be concerned about the safety of these customers? Even agency board member Andy Katz, who represents Berkeley and North Oakland and opposes the new dam proposal, said he disagreed with the agency's position, pointing out that it's no secret which businesses use the most water. In 1991, it was Chevron's Richmond refinery, which was consuming about 12 million gallons of water a day. "There is already a general awareness of who these businesses are," Katz explained.

In fact, the agency's decision to not divulge the names of businesses and industrial users may be unlawful. Terry Francke, a well-known legal expert on state public records law, said the 1997 amendment to the records act strongly suggests that it was intended to protect the identities of people — not businesses. Francke noted that in several places the amendment refers to "home address" or says that records may be released to "family members," but makes no such reference to companies or other organizations. "Under Proposition 59, the 2004 constitutional amendment, restrictions on access to government information are to be read narrowly," Francke said, "and the narrow reading of this section confines it to individuals, not corporate entities."

Francke also noted that the public records law allows East Bay MUD to release the records requested by the *Express*, even for individual people, if it chooses to do so. ●

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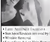
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FULL DISCLOSURE

THE NEW WAR OVER GAY MARRIAGE

A Berkeley couple teams up with a Bush lawyer to fight Proposition 8 in federal court, while opponents fixate on politics and polygamy

By Robert Gammon

When a lesbian couple from Berkeley filed suit in federal court last month to overturn Proposition 8, some prominent gay-rights activists questioned the timing of the case. Critics said that the US Supreme Court was not ready to embrace same-sex nuptials. After all, the California Supreme Court, which is more liberal than its federal counterpart, had just voted to uphold the anti-gay marriage amendment. But a closer look at the lawsuit filed by **Kris Perry** and **Sandy Stier** reveals that they have a stronger case than many realize, while their opponents appear to be focused on political scare tactics.

Perry and Stier, along with their co-plaintiffs **Paul Katami** and **Jeffrey Zarrillo**, a gay couple from Los Angeles, also have a powerful ally. Their main lawyer is **Ted Olson**, a staunch conservative who is considered one of the top constitutional scholars in the country. Olson, who is straight, served under President **George W. Bush** as the US solicitor general. In that role, he represented the Bush administration and successfully argued numerous cases in front of the US Supreme Court, and so is well aware of its political leanings and its judicial philosophies. He also represented Bush in winning the infamous case that decided the 2000 presidential election — Bush v. Gore.

But Olson also is a civil libertarian who believes that denying gays and lesbians the right to marry is wrong. In Perry and Stier's lawsuit, which Olson authored, he argues that Prop. 8 violates the US Constitution's ban on discrimination and disparate treatment. The Berkeley couple also is represented by **David Boies**, a prominent liberal attorney, whom Olson asked to be his co-counsel, thereby giving the case bipartisan credibility. Boies was the lead lawyer for **Al Gore** in Bush v. Gore, and so has first-hand knowledge of Olson's considerable skills. One of Olson's strengths is his ability to frame an argument simply and powerfully.

That skill is on display in Perry and Stier's lawsuit. "As a result of Prop. 8," Olson wrote in the straightforward ten-page filing, "plaintiffs are barred from marrying the individual they wish to marry and are instead left only with the separate-but-unequal option of domestic partnership." In one short sentence, Olson managed to make Prop. 8 sound downright un-American, while at the same time referencing one of the most important US Supreme Court cases in history — Brown v. Board of Education, the 1954 landmark decision that ordered an end to segregated, "separate-and-unequal" schools.

Indeed, Olson has framed Perry and Stier's case as a historic civil rights battle, akin to Brown or Loving v. Virginia, the 1967 Supreme Court ruling that ended state bans on interracial marriage. As a result, the case is far different from the recently decided state challenge to Prop. 8, which centered on the narrow question of whether a simple majority of voters could amend the state's constitution to eliminate the rights of a minority. Perry and Stier's lawsuit, by contrast, is a broad, sweeping assault on all same-sex marriage bans, using Prop. 8 as its primary target. It contends that the measure illegally discriminates against gays and lesbians and unlawfully denies them their constitutionally protected right to liberty and happiness in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection and Due Process clauses. And because it's a federal case, it will not only legalize gay marriage in California if it wins, but will make same-sex nuptials legal throughout the nation.

So how did Perry and Stier get involved in the case? The two declined to be interviewed, saying they were not yet ready to go public with their story. But a little sleuthing revealed that their involvement appears to be linked to their relationship to the true backers of the lawsuit, gay rights activist and political operative **Chad Griffin** and film director **Rob Reiner**, whose hit movies include *When Harry Met Sally* and *The Princess Bride*.

> To most gays and lesbians, the polygamy argument is an offensive canard designed to demonize them, scare heterosexuals, and confuse people about what will happen if gays are allowed to marry.

Griffin and Reiner have been friends since the mid-1990s, when Griffin worked in the Clinton White House and Reiner was researching his film, *The American President*. The two recently created a nonprofit, the American Foundation for Equal Rights, which is sponsoring the lawsuit, and sit on its board. Other board members include **Bruce Cohen**, co-producer of the Academy Award-winning film *Milk*, and **Dustin Lance Black**, who won an Oscar for writing the *Milk* screenplay.

As for Perry, she is executive director of First 5 California, a Sacramento-based foundation created by Reiner that distributes tobacco-tax funds to childcare and educational groups and organizations. The funds come from the Reiner-sponsored 1998 state initiative Prop. 10. Perry has headed up First 5 California since 2005. According to sworn statements that she and Stier filed with the court, they have been together since 2000 and have raised four sons in Berkeley, the oldest of whom is now in college, the second oldest is entering college, and the two youngest are beginning high school this fall.

Perry and Stier said in the statements that they originally got married on February 21, 2004 at San Francisco's City Hall just after Mayor **Gavin Newsom** began marrying same-sex couples. "In August of that same year, we renewed our vows in a large celebration with our friends and family," Perry wrote. "Over 100 guests attended. Our beautiful children were in the wedding party. It was one of the happiest days of my life." But Perry said she and Stier were devastated when the state Supreme Court invalidated their marriage later that year. She said they intended to wed again when the high court legalized gay marriage last year, but then decided to wait until the Prop. 8 fight was settled. In preparation for the lawsuit, they applied for a marriage license last month with the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office, but were denied because of their sexual orientation.

In an interview, Griffin said his organization chose Olson after an acquaintance suggested that the Bush lawyer was on their side and was ready to take up the cause of gay marriage. "That was shocking to me," said Griffin, who also helped lead the political campaign last year against Prop. 8. "Ted Olson was someone I've loved to hate from afar. I blamed him for the torturous eight years of George Bush." But Griffin said that while meeting with Olson late last fall, he quickly decided that having the lawyer who won Bush v. Gore lead the federal same-sex marriage fight could be a game-changer. "About half way into our meeting," Griffin said, "I realized I was seated across from someone who is one of the grandest, most articulate advocates for gay marriage that our movement has ever seen."

As for the argument by some gay and lesbian activists that it's too early to take the case to federal court and that it's better to fight for gay marriage politically, one state at a time, Griffin pointed to the long list of civil rights victories won in courtrooms over the years. If others had waited for society to finally accept their causes, it might have taken decades longer to desegregate schools or allow people of different races to intermarry. "The time is now, because people are suffering today because of Prop. 8," he said. "I'm not willing to wait another ten to twenty years for equality."

Griffin also described the struggle for gay rights as a "war" that should be fought "aggressively on all fronts." One of those fronts is film. Griffin also was an executive producer of *Outrage*, a recently released documentary that exposed the hypocrisy of closeted gay politicians who have fought against gay rights over the years, including **Larry Craig**, the former Republican US senator from Idaho who was caught trying to solicit sex from a male cop in a men's restroom.

The lawsuit against Prop. 8 names Governor **Arnold Schwarzenegger** and state Attorney General **Jerry Brown** as the main defendants in the case. But neither is expected to mount much of a defense. Instead, it will be the anti-gay marriage Prop. 8 proponents — the Alliance Defense Fund — who will battle Olson and Boies. In an interview, one of the Alliance Defense Fund's attorneys, **Joseph Infranco**, described the lawsuit as being "radical," and believes that the definition of marriage is an issue best left up to the states. He also argued that the US Supreme Court would not overturn the will of the people. "I don't believe the court will disregard a substantial majority of Americans and constitutions of thirty states," he said, referring to the states that, like California, only recognize heterosexual marriage.

But predictions aside, the anti-gay marriage folks appear to be short on solid legal arguments and fixated on politics and spin — at least so far. For example, during an interview, Infranco chose not to directly respond to Olson's Due Process or Equal Protection arguments, and instead argued that allowing gays to marry represents a slippery slope that will ultimately lead to the legalization of polygamy. "Once marriage can be redefined in one way, it can be redefined in other ways," he said.

To most gays and lesbians, the polygamy argument is an offensive canard designed to demonize them, scare heterosexuals, and confuse people about what will happen if gays are allowed to marry. "It just shows how weak their arguments are," said **Ted Boutrous**, one of Olson's legal partners. "There are no decisions by the Supreme Court or any other court that would support the polygamy theory that the Prop. 8 proponents keep peddling."

The polygamy argument also is an attempt to define what this case is about. The anti-gay-marriage folks want the focus to be on gays and lesbians trying to "redefine marriage." It's an argument they know sells in Middle America where people are resistant to changing established institutions. Along the same lines, they're attempting to portray gays and lesbians as seeking new rights for themselves that if granted will open the door to others who want new rights, too, including polygamists.

But from Olson's point of view, gays and lesbians who want to marry are not seeking some new right; they're simply asking to be treated like heterosexuals. And because Prop. 8 prevents that, it violates the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution. In other words, gays and lesbians aren't seeking to "redefine marriage," or expand it so that it someday will include polygamists. They're merely asking to marry the person of their choice — just like heterosexuals. "Our clients want the same rights that everyone already has," Boutrous said. "A polygamist would be asking for a right that no one has."

At this point, it looks as if the battle over whether gays and lesbians should be treated equally under the law or whether they're attempting to "redefine marriage," may dominate the case. The first significant court hearing is scheduled for July 2 in San Francisco federal court. Perry and Stier are asking for a preliminary injunction that would prohibit Prop. 8 from taking effect. That may be a long shot, but the case ultimately appears headed for the US Supreme Court, regardless of the initial outcome.

Right now, there seems to be two solid votes on the high court against gay marriage. In the 2003 case Lawrence v. Texas, Justices **Antonin Scalia** and **Clarence Thomas** voted to uphold a Texas law that made gay sex a felony. But how the two other conservative justices, **John Roberts** and **Samuel Alito**, will vote is less certain. Roberts, in particular, may be attracted by Olson's equal protection argument, because he is a staunch opponent of discrimination. And as for the swing vote, Justice **Anthony Kennedy**, gay rights supporters have to be heartened by the fact that he authored the majority decision in Lawrence. And that he sided with the four liberal justices and wrote the majority opinion in another gay rights case, Romer v. Evans, in 1996. ●

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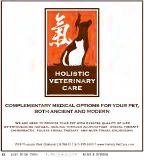
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Oakland Tech principal Sheilagh Andujar says there is a slow change at the school.

Ali Thanawalla

THE RETURN TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A growing number of Oakland families are making the switch from private schools

By Sam Levin

For eight years Joanna Berg and her husband spent $40,000 every year to send their two sons to Head-Royce, a private K-12 college-prep school in Oakland. Berg, who grew up attending private schools in San Francisco, had never considered sending her kids to Oakland public schools — and, financially, it wasn't necessary either.

But two years ago, when Berg's eldest son Jason expressed unhappiness with the culture at Head-Royce, Berg and her husband, who live in Montclair, decided to transfer him to Oakland Technical High School. "I was phenomenally impressed," Berg said, referring to the public school's specialized tracked programs. "I kind of can't believe I ever paid so much. It really gave me the sense that education is a right and not a privilege."

Today, Berg professes herself a "proponent of public school." "I love it," she said. "It is energetic, it is lively. ... You look around at all the people and you think, 'This is Oakland.'" Plus, the Bergs have more money to send their kids to college. It was a no-brainer then that their younger son would also say good-bye to the fourteen-acre, polished confines of Head-Royce and enter the urban reality of Oakland Tech, which he'll do this coming school year.

Though not financially motivated, the Bergs are part of a small but growing number of Oakland parents who have traditionally sent their kids to private school but now view public schools as a viable option for their kids' education. The trend is a result of several factors, including the plummeting economy, a slowing of the migration of families out of Oakland, and the steady rise of private-school tuition.

"There is a huge interest from a lot of different families," said Oakland Tech principal Sheilagh Andujar. The school has ramped up its outreach at public and private middle schools. "We are pulling from every geographic area of Oakland," she said. These days, Andujar said, the demographics have shifted a bit, with Oakland Tech enrolling slightly fewer African-American students and slightly more Latino and Caucasian students. "The school culture is improving," she said, referring to the increased buzz surrounding Oakland Tech and a more diverse student population.

For the 2008-09 school year, 26 new freshmen entered Oakland Tech from private schools, according to parent Steve Gelb, who helps with the school's tours and outreach. Typically, fewer than five students a year make this crossover, he said.

Relative to the 1,713 students presently enrolled at Oakland Tech, the number is fairly small, but the weight it carries with it is tangible. Wealthier families bring with them more financial resources, as well as the ability to be more actively involved in school life, said Gelb. "When these families trickle over, it is a big deal," he said, citing increased parent involvement and investment. A recent silent auction held by the Parent Teacher Student Association raised $38,000, compared to $24,000 last year — a jump which Berg credits to the influx of more private-school parents.

Partially responsible for this shift is the slowing exodus of families from Oakland. During the last decade, the Oakland Unified School District has seen a sharp decline in enrollment as many families fled to Contra Costa County and beyond in what demographers have characterized as an out-migration from Oakland. Since 1998, there has been a 28 percent drop in enrollment. But from the 2007-08 to the 2008-09 school year, the dip in enrollment was just 0.6 percent, says Jiwon Lam, the district's acting coordinator of school portfolio management. That's compared to a 1.4 percent decrease in private school enrollment during the same time period, according to the California Department of Education Online Private School Directory. And the public school projections for

Joanna Berg took her kids out of Head-Royce to enroll them at Oakland Tech [illegible]

2009-10 show a drop of only 108 students, a 0.3 percent decline.

Meanwhile, the deepening recession is hitting Oakland private schools, where officials are allotting larger portions of their budgets toward financial aid. This places a strain on tuition, which, at the majority of local schools, has increased about 5 percent annually for the last decade and has generally faced some sort of rise every year since the school's inception. The operating budget of a competitive school is entirely dependent on tuition revenue, and as costs of financial aid, teacher's salaries, capital projects, and the maintenance and growth of programs and facilities rise annually, so does the tuition.

At the College Preparatory School, a private, 350-student high school, tuition has increased from $28,100 in 2008-09 to $29,950 in 2009-10. Accordingly, the financial aid budget increased from $1.5 million to $1.8 million in the same period. Around fifteen students who have never before needed financial assistance are requiring it, said admissions director Jonathan Zucker. Typically, he said, no more than two students newly require assistance. "There is no doubt that cost is a huge factor, and now we are competing a lot more with public and parochial schools," Zucker said. With their tuition costs continuing to rise, Zucker said he is wary of the persistence of this pattern. "In the long term we can't sustain an 8 percent increase in tuition yearly," he said. Despite this, enrollment at CPS has remained steady. Applications at some private schools have gone down significantly. Tyler Kreitz, admissions director at Bishop O'Dowd High School, said that applications decreased by nearly 10 percent from 2008-09 to 2009-10. "People are losing their jobs and they just can't pay," Kreitz said. He added that the whole process was slightly less competitive this year, though they still managed to enroll a full class. O'Dowd's 2009-10 academic budget will include 24.8 percent of students on financial aid. Ten years ago, the percent of the student body on aid was less than half of that.

On campus, the financial battle has a looming role in everyday life. "It seems everybody is going towards financial aid," said O'Dowd freshman Sylvia Allinson. Allinson, who lives with her grandmother, said she is uncertain whether her family can continue paying for private school. "I talk to a lot of my friends and they are thinking of switching over," she added.

OUSD spokesman Troy Flint credits the increased enrollment not to private school costs or the economy, but to the improved image of Oakland public schools. "It is this idea that the future of America is tied to the quality of public school," he said. "It dovetails with the current economic state."

Still, Flint would like to see more students enroll in OUSD. "It would be really beneficial if more students filtered in to the district," he said, citing the policy within the district through which schools are awarded money based on enrollment and attendance. In addition, Flint said that a small baby boom in Oakland around six years ago is also providing new students and contributing to the flattening decline. Part of the baby boom, he said, is the influx of young couples into Oakland after the 1991 firestorm.

Katherine Epstein, admissions director at Head-Royce, said that she noticed a shift in her discussions with parents of kindergarteners. "There are families telling us that they just don't want to start on a tuition path," she said. "That is a message we haven't really heard as much in the past."

Lam said that the out migration of families and the growth of charter schools were the two major factors that caused the initial decline over the last decade. Now, "families are not moving out, and there has been more of a stabilization," she said. "The issue in all high schools — and Oakland Tech is no exception — is that the key to enrollment is making sure students get what they need to continue from the 9th grade to the 12th grade." Lam added. Better retention rates, she said, have also increased numbers this last academic year. Along with the growing cost of private school education, Lam said that an even greater large-scale change may come from the potential migration of families back into Oakland — a trend she argues could have the most impact on fluctuating numbers. "The Oakland landscape has changed a lot," she said. "We just have to wait and see." ●

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Toody Maher had long dreamed of adopting a local park. Two years ago she decided the time had come

Chris Duffey

A Park Grows in Richmond

How one woman is trying to improve life in a tough city — playground by playground

By Erin Gilmore

Bitch bitch ! ♥—%$#@ — hot bitch" is scrawled in white spray paint on the jungle gym at Richmond's Elm Playlot. Used condoms and empty gin bottles lie beneath the slide, and two swings are frayed from canine teeth marks. The jungle gym is a sad focal point of the playground's current role as a gathering spot for pit bulls, drug dealers, and junkies.

Piles of broken glass and kitchen trash blight the adjacent neighborhood. Many nearby houses sport sturdy iron fences and grates or plywood on the windows and doors. People walking by contort their faces into guarded masks, and small children soon become authorities on needles and guns. More than 1,500 children under the age of six live within ten blocks of this corner at Elm Avenue and 8th Street, but they and their parents typically avoid this tiny park in Richmond's notorious Iron Triangle.

It's a rare person who can look at such desolation and see a patch of light. But Toody Maher is such a person. The tall, square-shouldered Richmond resident has assigned herself the seemingly hopeless task of rehabilitating the playground and resurrecting the community. Armed with an unwavering belief that every child deserves have a safe place to play, Maher hopes to revive Elm Playlot and renew the surrounding neighborhood in the process.

Maher's own Canadian childhood was marked by long days at the neighborhood park, a safe thriving centerpiece of her Montreal community. "Even in the middle of winter my mom would give me and my three brothers and sisters breakfast, dress us in our snow clothes, walk us two blocks to the park," she recalled. "Everyone who had children went there. It's where friendships were formed, where parents met their closest friends. So much of our growing up was play and we were never bored. I think that's why I've always been magnetized to parks. Parks are power spots to me, and when I see them not reaching their potential, I can't stand it."

Today at Elm Playlot, Maher is trying to create a similar space for thousands of deserving kids to play meaningfully. Her vision revolves around a radical idea she calls a "park host" or "play leader." In thousands of European parks, a park host is a full-time job for trained professionals who create play opportunities for children while watching over their park. Studies indicate that play increases any time someone staffs a park, she says.

Maher vowed long ago that if she became wealthy she'd build a community playground and serve as its park host. "One day my partner said, 'Why are you waiting to get rich?'" Maher recalled in an interview. "And I didn't have an answer. My consulting contracts had ended. I had the time, and I thought, 'Why am I waiting? I'm going to start building this playground right now.' It was the light-bulb moment."

So in January 2007 she took action. For four months, she immersed herself in the city's parks. She did some research and discovered that 22 percent of Richmond's land area lies in 54 separate parks and eight playlots. The parks were there — but, by and large, the people weren't. Maher learned where the new play structures were, and

Continued on page 17

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A Park Grows on Richmond

Continued from page 15

discovered how infrequently kids used them. She also went to parks that worked, and watched children play among groups of seniors gathering for tai chi classes. She began to imagine the mix of fixed and varied elements that she would build into her park: a bubble machine, an herb and butterfly garden, running water for streams.

"Everything in my work life has been about one thing, take an idea and make it happen," she said. "So that's what I'm doing, taking a run-down, seldom used, little neighborhood park and attempting to transform it into an outdoor play space where kids want to come to play every day."

But can a well-intentioned white lady who lives across town from a tough inner-city park really make a difference? After all, Richmond's own park improvement efforts had failed to make any real progress in many troubled neighborhoods. And ideas as radical and costly as a full-time park host or kid-sized teepees and streams were received with understandable cynicism when Maher first shared them. The money alone was daunting. She would need at least $400,000 just to think about her project.

> Can a well-intentioned white lady who lives across town from a tough inner-city park really make a difference? After all, ideas as radical and costly as a full-time park host or kid-sized teepees and streams were received with understandable cynicism

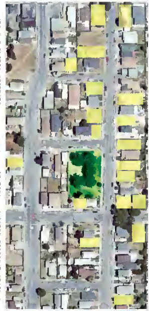
But as Maher's persistence slowly proved her mettle, the community's initial skepticism began to melt. Little did neighbors know that making things happen is Toody Maher's specialty.

Maher describes herself as an action-oriented, connect-the-dots kind of person. She is brimming with ideas and inspiration; words tend to spill out from her with a breathless quality made more endearing by her mild stutter. She's the kind of person who instantly responds to e-mails at 10:30 p.m. and squeezes long thoughts into her text messages.

Yet straight out of UC Berkeley, she spent four paralyzing months climbing the walls in the backroom of a sunless Los Angeles office that sold bonds. Terrified of spending her life squeezing her size-twelve feet into stiff leather pumps and breathing recirculated air, she reached for an idea that would help her escape.

One year before, while playing pro volleyball in Switzerland, Maher had met the originator of Swatch. She saw potential in the plastic watches with bright wristbands and believed they would take off in the United States. She began spending nights at the library reading up on how to craft a

Continued on page 18



Toody Maher

In this aerial photo of the neighborhood surrounding Elm Playlot, abandoned homes are colored yellow

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The play structure at the Elm Playlot is tagged with graffiti on a weekly basis.

Photonone

A Park Grows in Richmond

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business plan, and eventually convinced the president of Swatch to meet her in Los Angeles to hear her pitch. In a bungalow at the Beverly Hills Hotel, Maher pitched her plan. Her earnest passion didn't entirely sway the blunt Swiss president. "Your plan is bullshit," he told her when she was done. "But I like your chutzpah."

And so, at age 23, Maher had won the right to distribute Swatch in eleven Western states. Within three years, her sales had topped $30 million. Maher later moved on to start Fun Products, a Berkeley company that created the world's first clear telephone. That emblem of the early 1990s, with its colored innards and flashing lights, was named Fortune magazine's 1990 Product of the Year and Maher was honored by Inc. magazine as its Entrepreneur of the Year. "I realized I was good at product sensing," she said. "I knew what people wanted."

Around the same time, she also began striving to give something back to her community. She worked with SF nonprofit JUMA Ventures to employ at-risk youth at ballpark concessions. And while working as a consultant for a UCLA research institute, she helped translate studies about children's wellbeing into information easily usable by parents.

To Maher, it is only common sense that thriving communities and neighborhoods revolve around a nucleus of activity. But driving through the Iron Triangle, entire blocks suggest that people have lost hope. Elm Playlot is one such place. A semi-circle of empty benches faces the plastic play structure, and a concrete path cuts between untended grass and a groundcover of woodchips. Five massive and beautiful sycamore trees curve over the land, but beneath them lie dog feces and hypodermic needles. The colorful but unused play structure stands in stark contrast to its surroundings, a testament to failed good intentions.

Even if Elm Playlot were clean, Maher believes kids need a place that facilitates growth and the development of life skills. She calls this notion "meaningful play." The concept is based on research that suggests how a child's brain is hard-wired early in life. Research suggests that a child's linguistic, social, cognitive, physical and creative development — or lack thereof — is based on their early experiences. Through play, kids practice skills they will need throughout life. Waiting in line for the slide teaches social cooperation, building a fort develops cognitive skills, climbing up ropes strengthens physical acuity. When children lack a safe, stimulating place to play, they fall behind developmentally.

Middle- and upper-class families can inspire their kids with Gymboree, art classes, and lessons in the sport or activity of their choice. But in low-income communities, children are generally limited to playing at school and in their neighborhoods. And when those neighborhoods are dangerous, they're more likely to fall behind or get into trouble. In her research, Maher encountered a study that suggests living in a blighted area is the equivalent to taking away a year of school.

She was immediately drawn to Elm Playlot, a corner lot easily accessible to children. During the day, Maher would visit the park and sit there. But she never saw kids playing.

In the emerging world of meaningful play, play leaders supervise and guide children in inspiring and ever-changing types of play. Research suggests that guiding children in free play by giving them the elements to build forts, create sandcastles, or just play hide-and-seek increases their development. Maher believes the most essential play element for young children is a simple sandbox stocked with buckets, shovels, and water. Yet cities have largely stopped installing them because of the hassle of cleaning and maintenance.

"The play leader concept is unheard of in this country because we don't deeply value the environments we put our children in," Maher said. "So we're stuck in inertia. We built the same prefab jungle gym to the ground over and over. We put costly play equipment in parks that people stop using over time because there's no challenge involved. You go up, you walk across, you slide down. This isn't unique to Richmond; every city in the country is putting up equipment that is sterile, static and doesn't fit in with the environment. For children to be able to grow and thrive, we must carve out safe, stimulating, and soulful places for them to play. We know this, but changing the way we do business is hard to do."

Because Richmond's eight playlots are located in the city's densest urban areas, Maher concluded that they were in the direst need of help. She was immediately drawn to Elm Playlot, a corner lot easily accessible to children.

"When I started meeting with Toody, I told her that of all the parks, the one that needs her the most is Elm," said Cheryl Maier, the executive director of the nonprofit group Opportunity West, which is involved with a four-year-old initiative called Building Blocks for Kids. "Toody is a dreamer and a pit bull rolled into one. She doesn't take no for an answer, and she has made this park her full time job. She has the time to be tenacious enough to see the right people. Can she do it? Yes, she is doing it."

During the day, Maher would visit the park and sit there. But on visit after visit she never saw kids playing. She did see people running the stop sign on 8th Street, trash building up in driveways and yards, and abandoned houses falling into further disrepair. The park's most frequent visitors were men drinking and shooting guns into the sky at night, and the bright play structure was tagged weekly.

Because the surrounding neighborhood was a microcosm of Richmond's worst neighborhoods, Maher wanted Elm Playlot to be the first park she transformed. If her idea succeeded there, in the worst of places, she knew it would succeed elsewhere. So she started talking to neighbors.

Mother of four Carmen Lee was one of them. Lee, whose house on Elm Avenue is about ten steps from the park, is fed up with the neighborhood's crime. "Too many people I know get killed here," she said in an interview. "My friend got killed in the spring, a week before that happened it was someone else. Everyone's dyin' around here. It's too easy for people here to get guns; they get 'em like you can get a candy bar. That's the thing I hate. I hate that my five-year-old baby has to grow up like this, knowing about guns and death. She knows more about guns than I ever did. It's just senseless."

A safe gathering place is what many of Lee's neighbors desire. "Hopefully, the park will change things at least a little bit," Lee said of Maher's efforts. "There are a lot of people in the neighborhood I don't know, and I have neighbors I should know. There's a lot of separation around here, too much negativity. Maybe this park will be a place where we can get together."

Despite the self-enforced racial segregation visible throughout the neighborhood, Lee's comments highlight the tangible longing of the neighborhood's largely black and Hispanic residents to connect. "The boot of circumstance is around people's necks," Maher said. But below the surface, she believes, people yearn for something better.

"One thing that surprised me about Richmond is that there's a perception that it's this blank slate of awfulness, when, in fact, there's a world full of dedicated community activists working here," Maher said.

People want to help Richmond, and people are helping Richmond. Community leaders, city leaders, and a few people with inexhaustible passion fight the good fight against a tide of crime and despondency. By infusing funds into schools and community centers, more and more good has been etched out against the city's patchwork landscape. But as Maher would learn, there's a long way to go.

When Maher first presented her concept of park boats and play elements, she was met with cynicism. Her vision seemed like a big pipe dream for a place often so devoid of hope. At a community meeting on January 24, she got some skeptical looks and snickers at the mention of butterflies and bubble machines.

But in spite of all the snickers, it didn't take Maher long to begin mobilizing people. She has gotten nothing but support from city officials, who already wanted to rethink their playlots but didn't know where to start. They immediately agreed

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Trash litters the yards of homes neighboring the park.

Chris Duffey

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A Park Grows on Richmond

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to her pilot plan, and she dove head first into meetings with city council members, budget analysts, the city manager and anyone else who would talk to her.

"I started to see how the city was working and how things connected," Maher recalled. "And when I went outside that circle of leaders and talked to people in the neighborhood, I really realized that so many people were in their own little bubbles. But I saw how we could work together if we all collaborated."

In March of last year, Maher presented a 31-page park prospectus to the city and won approval to begin work to improve the park. After the city endorsed the reinvention of Elm Playlot as Pogo Park, Maher turned to the monumental task of fund raising.

The city's Redevelopment Agency took care of one major hurdle when it pledged 100 percent of the capital costs necessary to renovate the playlot, estimated at $400,000. Meanwhile, City Manager Bill Lindsay is committed to having the city's Public Works Department coordinate street improvements around renovations of the playlot.

To redesign the park, Maher raised $37,750 from individual donors — an amount that was matched by the city and awarded to Urban Ecology, an organization dedicated to building ecologically and socially healthy cities. Many talented playground experts are lending their eye to the design of the park, including Ron Holthuysen and his Scientific Art Studio, which is responsible for the play elements at the Bay Area Discovery Museum and the huge baseball glove towering over left field at AT&T Park. As luck would have it, Holthuysen's business is located in the Iron Triangle. With the help of Richmond residents in his employ, he is creating unique play elements for the new Pogo Park.

[illegible]

Maher eventually convinced the Richmond Housing and Community Department to commit to purchase and rehab several abandoned homes in the neighborhood.

In fact, the city is seeking out local businesses to contract and build each and every park element, from the fence to the office. "We are right at the cusp of doing something so different, in such a better way," Maher said. "Everything will be local, people who live in the neighborhood will get the building contracts, bringing the money back to them. It is an instant economic stimulus plan."

Maher began to realize that the desolation of the surrounding neighborhood fed the problems afflicting the Elm Playlot

Urban Ecology has involved the community in the design of play elements and park layouts. Community members also will be hired for the park's construction. Maher believes that the more threads that are weaved back into the neighborhood, the more chance the park has to succeed. If the park is designed by the mothers living down the street, built by teenagers whose little brothers will play there, and watched over by the grandmother who lives next door, the collective assumption is that people will be less likely to mess it up.

Playground designer Jay Beckwith, who is

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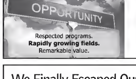

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based in Sebastopol and is one of his industry's most respected figures, is acting as Pogo Park's advisor and planner. The California Endowment awarded $25,000 to the urban design and land planning experts at MIG, who are considering how to make the biggest possible impact on public health in the park's design. To support educational programs at nearby Peres Elementary School that will mirror the programs at the park, the Irene S. Scully Family Foundation granted the project $20,000. And she convinced Kaiser Permanente to award $20,000 to support development of the play leader program.

But even if she managed to create a utopia among parks, Maher soon realized that Pogo Park alone couldn't solve all the community's problems.

During Maher's many visits to 8th Street and Elm Avenue, she began to realize that the desolation of the surrounding neighborhood fed the problems afflicting the Elm Playlot. After all, the neighborhood surrounding Elm Playlot was a far cry from the one where Maher spent her own childhood.

Eight out of ten houses immediately surrounding the park sit unoccupied, serving as magnets for vandals and drug users. No one bothers to clean up the waste piled behind low front yard fences. Keep-out signs and bright yellow auction notices are tacked over the plywood on windows and doors. The park's shiny jungle gym is just a tempting beacon in a dangerous landscape.

So when UC Berkeley doctorate student Joe Griffin approached Maher with an idea for a project to document the decay and danger of park's immediate neighborhood, she leapt at the chance to participate. Griffin, a native of Richmond, initiated his Photovoice project as a way to reach out to the community he grew up in. The project put cameras in the hands of Triangle residents and asked them to photograph what they liked and didn't like about their neighborhood. The photographs were paired with their recorded observations to create a valuable illustration of life in the Triangle.

Many photographed the houses: "It's not a good look for our daughters and sons to walk through and see where they live at. And when their teacher asks them 'Can you just draw us a picture of your neighborhood?' they're just going to draw old, rusty, broken-down or undone houses that, you know, we cannot explain why this is happening."

Others depicted the trash: "You look at a model of another neighborhood and then you see your neighborhood. You see it as being hopeless. I mean, it's not spoken, it's just implied. Every day. But, we should just refuse to live like, you know, with something like this."

Still others captured the Nevin Community Center: "I like this picture because there are all of my family members and ... everybody's in here doing something constructive. Just showing that people actually come here and do something, you know, as a people that try to better themselves."

Another celebrated a local community garden: "This is a beautiful community garden that the Iron Triangle has. I'd really like to see more gardens more, form in the city of Richmond."

Maher used the project as a tool to bring more city officials over to her side. After Photovoice, she had a new bottom line: the park could only be safe if the immediate neighborhood was safe, too. The

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Photovoice

Area residents documented what they liked and disliked about their neighborhood in Joe Griffin's Photovoice project.

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A Park Grows on Richmond

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Redevelopment Agency agreed, and city Housing Director Patrick Lynch responded by pledging a portion of the city's $3.6 million federal grant under the Urban Development Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to buy the abandoned houses that surround the park and remodel them into affordable housing.

"The NSP components will purchase and rehab blighted, foreclosed and abandoned properties and demolish blighted structures all in order to stabilize our most economically challenged neighborhoods," Lynch explained. "Pogo Park is an excellent example of a neighborhood reestablishing families' lives by merging supportive services with real property rehabilitation."

There's no magic wand to turn a vacant park in the middle of a low income neighborhood into a safe haven for children and their families. The Pogo Park plan acknowledges what's happening in Richmond and answers each challenge with a solution. For safety, install an attractive fence that will be open during the day and locked at night. For organization, build an office that will stock play supplies and healthy snacks. For meaningful play, provide children with a park host. To bring people together, schedule activities for children and exercise classes for parents.

"What started from a critical need to provide children with a place to play has turned into the catalyst for transforming the neighborhood," Maher said. "My job is to create a safe place for kids to play and to become a link in that long chain of efforts by folks devoted to Richmond to make this a better place for everyone."

Maher reached out to community residents to discover why they weren't visiting the park. Chris Duffey

Maher envisions the park as a gathering center for parents and plans to offer outdoor exercise classes and monthly health clinics. She imagines it as a community hub, with visits from Richmond's public bookmobile. She plans to work with teachers at Peres School to create activities that mirror and support what kids are doing at school.

"We want to have readings of books at the park that kids are reading in school, bridge some of the education through music that starts in school," she said. "By tapping into the existing network of Peres, activities of the park will help get kids ready for school."

With funding secured for the design and construction of the park, Maher is still seeking funds to develop and operate Pogo Park. Chief among her needs are funds to support the play leader program and newly formed Elm Playlot Action Committee. The committee will consist of six neighborhood parents who will approve goings-on at the park, from the selection of the play leader to the choice of park activities.

Once Pogo Park is finished, Maher hopes to apply the same model to the city's seven other playlots. She wants Richmond to prove that parks can be a catalyst for change and thus serve as an example to other cities with the same problems. To possibly justify the rehabilitation of more parks after this one, UC Berkeley's School of Public Health will use a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to conduct a study that measures the impact of the revitalized playlot on overall community health. Maher hopes that the result of the study will eventually influence government policy surrounding funding for public parks around the country.

Nothing is fixed overnight, but if you can't erase the trash, drugs, and blight that stains a neighborhood, perhaps at least one corner of this troubled city will be on its way up. Groundbreaking for Pogo Park is on track for August and with Maher's heavyweight army of supporters to fall back on, all signs point to success. ●

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ARTS & CULTURE

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AUDACITY AND HOPE

Despite last year's cancellation, Berkeley's long-running Juneteenth Festival soldiers on

By Rachel Swan

Soul food and crackerjack funk bands traditionally mark Berkeley's Juneteenth, or "Emancipation Day," celebrating the moment that slaves in Galveston, Texas, found out they were free. Although Galveston is ground zero for Juneteenth celebrations, Berkeley's version is the heavyweight on the West Coast. Started in 1987, it was the brainchild of several ex-Black Panthers, Cal alumni, and community activists. All had loosely coalesced around the idea of strengthening the African-American presence within Berkeley.

For the past two decades, festival organizers blocked off the Adeline corridor between Alcatraz and Ashby avenues — one of the city's last truly black neighborhoods. They filled the streets with food vendors and multiple stages of entertainment. Though its size decreased over the years, Juneteenth nonetheless had tremendous staying power. It persisted for two decades as an all-volunteer operation despite changes in the neighborhood and the political climate. It became a source of local pride. Yet it's also had its share of controversy.

Essentially an ad hoc operation, Juneteenth seemed to be woefully understaffed in the past. It often went on hours after the scheduled end time because festival volunteers had trouble getting all the vendors to close up shop. It caused major traffic problems. It strained the city's police force. Then, in 2007, a large fight broke out toward the end of the celebration, requiring police intervention, according to Berkeley police officer Andrew Frankel. It was one of several incidents that occurred in the area that day. According to the *Oakland Tribune*, there were two shootings during the festival, one on the 1500 block of Alcatraz Avenue and another at Alcatraz and Sacramento Street, a few blocks away. Although Juneteenth organizers couldn't really be held accountable for every spat in their vicinity, they were saddled with the bad press anyway. For these and other reasons, last year's festival was abruptly cancelled.

This year, Juneteenth is back. Organizers are pinning their hopes on the idea that 2009's event is going to be really, really great — and that history doesn't rear its ugly head.

Two months after the 2007 Juneteenth imbroglio, representatives from the city met with festival organizers for a "debriefing." Around that time, the organizers also received a letter from the city with suggestions for future improvements, said deputy city manager Lisa Caronna. Most of them were fairly straightforward. "There were things that we wanted to see managed differently and better," Caronna explained. "We wanted the vendors to remove their stuff in a timely fashion. We didn't want them to do some of the things in 2007 like putting stuff into the storm drain. We wanted more security officers that are hired by the event producers themselves. We wanted a person who specialized in events to coordinate the event."

It wasn't clear whether the organizers took these suggestions as mandates or as mere possibilities. At any rate, they apparently were taken by surprise during the event planning for 2008, when city officials presented a new list of terms and conditions. "There was not an agreement nor an accord from the city and the Juneteenth Festival board," said Gerald Baptiste Jr., the event's co-president. "A lot of that had to do with board's ability to change and respond to the city's deliverables. They came to us in too short a period of time to make changes." Shortly before the event was supposed to take place, organizers quietly pulled the plug.

Lothario Lotho

Show Details
The 22nd Juneteenth Festival runs Sunday, June 14, on Adeline St. (between Ashby & Alcatraz aves.) | 10 a.m.-5 p.m. free. BerkeleyJuneteenth.org

From the city's perspective, it was a matter of inadequate preparation — it really takes six months to a year to prepare for an event that requires the closure of major streets for a full day. The main concern was traffic, said Caronna. Adeline is a major thoroughfare, and closing several blocks of it for an entire day creates a lot of congestion on nearby streets. The other problem was the date. Traditionally, Juneteenth has coincided with Father's Day, an inopportune time to ask for extra police reinforcement. Frankel said the Berkeley Police Department has a lot of family-oriented officers among its ranks, and they weren't eager to spend the holiday patrolling the Berkeley-North Oakland border — an area known for homicides.

But to many people it looked like Berkeley was unfairly cracking down on its only long-standing celebration of African-American culture. "We don't want to use the term 'racism,'" said longtime Juneteenth host Lothario Lotho. "But there's a lot of public safety issues that had to be addressed. There's been a lot of difficulties with the police and the way they perceive the African-American males."

Thus began a protracted passive-aggressive battle between festival organizers and city administrators, which went on for several months in 2008. At one point, city administrators thought they had a solution: Why not relocate Juneteenth to a park — either Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park downtown or Cesar Chavez Park by the Berkeley Marina? The Juneteenth committee strongly objected to both. They wanted to keep the festival in a visibly black neighborhood, in accord with its theme. In that sense, Adeline Street seemed like the only logical choice. Organizers dug their heels in and ultimately the city conceded. "It's extremely important for it to be in the area of town that's most populated with African Americans," said Caronna. "The businesses there are also owned by people who live in the community. We totally got that."

This year, festival organizers came up with a compromise. They recruited ministers and local youth to serve as "ambassadors" for the event and help with "spiritual elevation." They scaled back the hours and hired more private security officers. They opted for a more "edu-tainment" themed lineup, which will include speeches by elected officials (among them Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Berkeley City Councilman Max Anderson, Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, and state assemblyman Sandré Swanson), performances by Black Repertory Theater, leaders from faith-based organizations, and booths with applications for traditionally black colleges. Headliners this year include R&B star James DeBarge and the rapping (or at least enterprising) pimp-turned-blues artist Fillmore Slim. The theme, inspired largely by Obama's presidency, is "Building Villages of Hope." It seems apropos for an event that's relied less on pragmatism than on faith that things will ultimately fall into place.

So it was revealing when, during the course of an interview with Baptiste, he decided he would no longer discuss past Juneteenth events. Shortly thereafter he sent an e-mail stating that he'd demand a retraction if any information regarding past events was published — even what he had already disclosed. "The 2009 Berkeley Juneteenth Festival Association, Inc. is excited about the upcoming event and has put to rest the 2008 cancellation event," he wrote. Perhaps the success of the festival depends partly on how well its organizers can re-cobble together its image.

But this time, Berkeley city officials seem to agree. "They took the time this year to prepare in advance, because they understand the complexity of pulling off an event like this," said Caronna, who played a large part in this year's planning operations. "Everything aligned. I don't think it's a big deal." Evidently, there's hope after all. ●

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EVENTS & ATTRACTIONS

Wayne Wallace

Homage to La Peña

Wayne Wallace pays tribute to the cultural center with a new suite-in-progress.

It didn't take much cajoling for trombonist Wayne Wallace to sell the board of La Peña Cultural Center on his idea for a 35th anniversary suite. Wallace had been closely associated with La Peña for many years, not to mention his idea gelled with the board's desire to put together an oral history project that would feature some of the principal artists and activists associated with La Peña since its inception. All they needed was a librettist to glue everything together, and spoken word poet Aya de León seemed like the obvious choice. Aside from her local stature, de León straddled two generations: Her mother helped paint La Peña's mural in the 1970s, and de León came of age in the era of hip-hop. It was her idea to bring a DJ onboard and present the audio portion of the suite in a pastiche format. Thus, it would genuflect to La Peña's founders — a motley group of Chilean exiles, local community activists, and artists with a polyglot sensibility — while resonating with a younger audience.

Now two years in the making, *La Peña — Ayer, Hoy y P'alante* is ready for its second unveiling. Last year's orchestra included musicians who represented Arab, Chilean, Caribbean, and Afro-Cuban traditions, along with hip-hop artists and spoken word poets. What was lacking, said development director Sylvia Sherman, was folkloric music of the Andes, which is elemental to La Peña's history. To rectify that absence the center hired two guest composers: La Peña Chorus director Lichi Fuentes and multi-instrumentalist Fernando Torres, who plays in the band Grupo Raíz. Besides incorporating more musical influences, participating artists also transformed the show's audio by pressing the oral history interviews onto vinyl. DJ Wonway Posibul will cut and scratch them while de León delivers her spoken-word libretto. The idea, said Sherman, is to "jog people through time."

Next year they hope to add a new multimedia element by digitizing all of La Peña's archival footage and splicing it together. The whole thing is organized thematically, rather than chronologically, so that audiences get the sense of unified artistic purpose and continuous flow of activity over 35 years. Sherman cites one piece of found footage that must have been from the late 1970s. It was an activist presentation on shantytowns in Chile, scored by two local musicians. Although it was made long before Internet technology, at a time when the average person wasn't expected to stay abreast of world affairs, it was nonetheless quite similar to the work La Peña produces today.

La Peña — Ayer, Hoy y P'alante happens Saturday, June 13, at **La Peña Cultural Center** (3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley). Preceded by a 7 p.m. art installation viewing of Hector Salgado's *Creating Home Away from Home*, which documents exiles from Chile. 8 p.m. $10-$14. LaPena.org.

— *Rachel Swan*

ATTRACTIONS

The Butterfly Garden Is Open Join Jan Southworth as we wander the peaceful pathways, watch hummingbirds and butterflies, and learn about butterfly gardening. Second Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Coyote Hills Regional Park, 8000 Patterson Ranch Rd., Fremont. 510-795-9385. EBParks.org.

[illegible] Days in the [illegible] Garden Hands-on activities and demonstrations. Learn about air quality, gardening, composting, solar energy, and more. Second and Fourth Saturday of every month, 12-4 p.m. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

Molecularium: Riding Snowflakes A digital planetarium show that introduces audiences to atoms, molecules, and polymers. Saturdays, 11:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m., Sundays, 12:30 p.m. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

Oakland [illegible] Marketplace Featuring homemade jewelry, art, fixtures, ceramics, paintings, photographs, dolls, soaps, clothing, floral arrangements, greeting cards, and more. Info: 510-238-4928. Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. free. Frank Ogawa Plaza, at 14th and Broadway sts., Oakland.

PROVE IT! — A ChemMystery A crime has been committed, and forensic scientists of all ages are needed at the scene to solve the mystery. Young scientists probe the Missing Bear Mystery while older visitors investigate the Missing Money Mystery. Once on the case, visitors use chromatography to analyze inks, match DNA and fingerprint samples, analyze liquids, powders, and crystals, conduct smell tests, perform handwriting analysis, and more. Daily. LawrenceHallofScience.org/exhibits/chemmystery.html. Lawrence Hall of Science, Centennial Dr. (above the UC Berkeley campus, just below Grizzly Peak Blvd.), Berkeley. 510-642-5132. LawrenceHallofScience.org.

Redwood Valley Railway Twelve-minute scenic journey by steam train through the redwoods of Tilden Regional Park. Info: 510-548-6100. Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. $2 per ride, or 5 tickets for $8. Tilden Regional Park, intersection of Wildcat Canyon Rd. and Grizzly Peak Blvd., Berkeley. 510-525-2233.

Sunday Nature Adventures Learn about snakes, butterflies, mammals, or shellmounds and their importance to the world we live in. Young [illegible] this weekly program. The program is great for church and scout groups. Registration required. Sundays, 2-3 p.m. free. Coyote Hills Regional Park, 8000 Patterson Ranch Rd., Fremont. 510-795-9385. EBParks.org.

University of California Botanical Garden See plants you won't find anywhere else and more than 12,000 varieties in bloom. Free docent tours Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 1:30 p.m., open daily 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Free admission on Thursdays. Daily. UC Berkeley Botanical Garden, 200 Centennial Dr., Berkeley. 510-643-2755. BotanicalGarden.berkeley.edu.

FAIRS, FESTIVALS & FUND-RAISERS

Alameda Farmers' Market With locally grown fruits and vegetables, plus family activities. For info, visit PCFMA.com. Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Continues through Dec. 26. free. Webster St. at Taylor Ave., Alameda. 510-747-7400.

Berkeley Juneteenth Festival With music by Fillmore Slim, [illegible], the Delegation, plus speeches by elected officials and a People's Bazaar with arts, crafts, and food. Sat., June 13, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. free. Adeline St. between Ashby & Alcatraz Aves., Berkeley.

Live Oak Park Fair With a [illegible] featuring fine crafts, contemporary art, handcrafted jewelry, clothing, quilts, baskets, sculpture, clay, fiber, glass, metal, wood, block prints, paintings, and illustrations by more than 100 artisans. Plus food and music by Wildcard, Mike Lee [illegible], and [illegible]. Sat., June 13, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., June 14, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. free. Live Oak Park, 1301 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley.

Three Ring Bingo Hosted by [illegible] of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Thu., June 11, 6:30 p.m.; Thu., July 23, 7-10

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PICKS

Closing Day at Golden Gate Fields

Once again, the Sport of Kings has failed to anoint a Triple Crown winner, but local bettors can still walk away winners on Sunday, June 14, at **Golden Gate Fields** (1100 Eastshore Hwy., Berkeley). The thoroughbreds will be making their last laps around the track for the season this weekend before heading out to the county fair circuit for the summer. **Closing day** is also dollar day, meaning that the money you save from parking, admittance, food, and drink can go to picking a pony that will earn you enough money to possibly fund your own summer vacation. 10 a.m., $4-$15. GoldenGateFields.com — *Kirby Kleinman*

Gigi's Hella Gay Dance Party

San Francisco may have its famed Castro district, its Frameline *Film Festival*, and its iconic hang-out spots. But Oakland also boasts a large and vibrant LGBT populace — one that may, in fact, be growing faster than that of its sister city. With the increasing demand has come several new clubs, including the Vibe Lounge downtown, and Club Velvet, which serves queer women in the Laurel District. Older joints like the White Horse also stepped up their game by hosting drag king shows and dance parties that cater to a younger, hipper demographic. And the scene keeps expanding. This Saturday, June 13, marks the first installment of **Gigi's Hella Gay Dance Party**, a new fete with a rotating cast of DJs spinning disco, hip-hop, mash-ups, electronica, and indie rock at Oakland's **Ghost Town Gallery** (2519 San Pablo Ave.). Local vet DJ Black is the leading act. 4 p.m., free. MySpace.com/GhostTownGallery — *Rachel Swan*

Live Oak Park Fair

Two [illegible], a fusion [illegible] "world [illegible]" trio, and a ukulele-strumming, rider rocker will convene at the weekend's **Live Oak Park Fair**, which also features a giant bazaar with ceramics, woven apparel, paintings, handmade furniture, jewelry, accessories, hemp soaps, body oils, and odd apothecary products. One of this year's highlights is the aforementioned ukulele player, an adorable ex-punk who lifted her stage name from William Henry Harrison's presidential campaign jingle. (His slogan, "Tippycanoe and Tyler Too," referred to a battle in which Harrison prevailed — "Tyler too" was a nod to his running mate John Tyler.) Formerly a drummer for the rock band Kirby Grips, Tippy Canoe switched to ukulele about six years ago and has remained a local hit ever since. Live Oak Park Fair happens on Saturday, June 13 and Sunday, June 14 at **Live Oak Park** (1301 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley). 10 a.m.-6 p.m., free. LiveOakParkFair.com — *R.S.*

Three Ring Bingo

You never thought it would make a comeback, but bingo just garnered new hipster cachet in Oakland — and not just among sixty-year-old spinsters who would prefer to spend Saturday night at church. Alameda's **Rhythmix Cultural Works gallery** (2513 Blanding Ave.) will host three Thursday night **bingo parties** this summer with refreshments and terrific prizes. San Francisco Mime Troupe director Ed Holmes will host, and all proceeds will benefit Rhythmix Cultural Works. Thursdays, June 11, July 23, & Aug. 13, 7-9:30 p.m., $10 gets you ten [illegible] and a drink ticket. Rhythmix.org — *R.S.*

E&A

p.m. [illegible] Aug. 13. 7-10 p.m. $10 [illegible] [illegible] Oakland, [illegible] 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-865-5060. Rhythmix.org.

[illegible] by the Bay [illegible] Sale [illegible] [illegible] Sat., June 13, [illegible] Eagles Hall, 2305 Alameda Ave., Alameda. 415-[illegible]

RIOS

Art [illegible] for Children with Disabilities [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] Oakland Public Library [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

Children's Fairyland [illegible] [illegible] Saturdays, 11 a.m., Sundays, 11 a.m., [illegible] Children's Fairyland, 699 Bellevue Ave. (at Lake Merritt), Oakland. 510-452-2259. Fairyland.org.

Children's Chinese Dance [illegible] Asian Cultural Center, 388 9th St., Oakland. 510-637-0455. OACC.org.

[illegible] [illegible] Asian Cultural Center, 388 9th St., Oakland. 510-637-0455. OACC.org.

[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

East Bay [illegible] [illegible]

East Bay Oakland [illegible] Oakland Public Library [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

East Side [illegible] Club [illegible] Oakland Public Library [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

East Side [illegible] Anime [illegible] [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

Oakland, [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

Jewelry Making with [illegible] [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

Jewelry Making with [illegible] [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] Berkeley. 510-526-3843. [illegible]

[illegible] for Girls [illegible] Albany Karate for Kids, 1249 Marin Ave., Albany. 510-524-8238.

Lakeview [illegible] [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

Magic by [illegible] [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] Sing-Along [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] OaklandArtGallery.org.

[illegible] for Kids [illegible]

Paint-a-Mug for Father's Day [illegible] Habitot Children's Museum, 2065 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-647-1111. Habitot.org.

Puppet Art [illegible] [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] at Rockridge [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] Berkeley [illegible]

Teen Advisory [illegible] [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

Teen Advisory Board Berkeley [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

Teen [illegible] Club [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] [illegible] BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

[illegible] [illegible]

LGBT

Dress-Up Wednesdays [illegible] LoveItGirl.com.

East Bay Bi-Friendly Berkeley [illegible]

East Bay Front Runners [illegible] FrontRunners.org [illegible]

LGBT Hip-Hop Night [illegible]

LGBT Weight Watchers Meeting [illegible]

[illegible] Gay Straight [illegible] [illegible] OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] Drag [illegible] [illegible]

SOCIAL EVENTS

Bay Area [illegible] Championship [illegible]

[illegible] Quiz [illegible]

Berkeley, Under the [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] Jack London Square [illegible] JacklondonSquare.com.

[illegible] Salon [illegible]

[illegible] Trivia Night [illegible]

Laugh Club [illegible]

The Living Philosophers Group [illegible]

More Listings Online

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Oakland Coffee Club [illegible]

[illegible] Oakland [illegible] Gospel Choir [illegible] [illegible]

Pub Quiz [illegible]

Pub Trivia [illegible]

[illegible] Society Club [illegible]

Weekly Sing-Along [illegible] ACLibrary.org.

SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

[illegible] Biggest Loser [illegible]

[illegible] Golf Group [illegible] Metropolitan Golf Links [illegible]

Metropolitan Golf Links Chipping and Putting Clinic [illegible]

Metropolitan Golf Links Pitching and Bunker Clinic [illegible]

Midnight Soccer [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] Bike [illegible] Weekly Ride [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] AlbanyBowl.com.

[illegible] Club Weekly Meeting [illegible]

San Francisco Frontrunners [illegible]

[illegible] and Qi Gong [illegible] [illegible]

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MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

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FANDANGO

The Oakland Museum of California examines Mexico's African heritage

Everyone knows the Portuguese and Spanish initiated the African slave trade in the late-15th century to replace the diminishing native laborforce in the West Indies, and that the French and English brought slavery to North America later for similar reasons (Indians having proved unsuitable). What is not generally understood, however, is the role of Africans in Mexican history: it was only in 1992, on the Columbian quincentenary, that Mexico officially recognized Africa as the third "root" of its culture, joining its Indian and European heritages. Some 250,000 to 300,000 Africans worked on *haciendas* or in silver mines; colonial Mexico in the early 17th century, in fact, was the largest slave enclave in the New World. At that time, Yanga, an escaped slave, fought a successful guerilla war and founded a "black" city in Veracruz state that now bears his name, but slavery would persist in Mexico until the 1829 liberation from Spain, after a twenty-year struggle led by the mulatto José María Morelos y Pavón. A generation later, in 1863, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation freed *norteamericano* slaves — fourscore years after English and German Americans won their freedom.

Such is the grim background to ***The African Presence in Mexico: From Yanga to the Present***, a survey of paintings, prints, photographs, movie posters, musical instruments, and other artifacts now at the Oakland Museum of California. Organized by Cesáreo Moreno, visual arts director at the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, and Sagrario Cruz-Carretero of the University of Veracruz, it is mandatory viewing for pretty much anyone these days except the most retrograde rebel yellers. It is accompanied by two exhibitions, *Who Are We Now? Roots, Resistance & Recognition* and *Common Goals: Common Ground*, that examine the relationship between black and Latino cultures (e.g., the Afro-Mexican battalion of widows who fought with *Zapata* in the 1910-20 Mexican Revolution). The melancholy and ironic aspects of history are certainly in evidence — the hispanicized black *conquistador* who aided Cortez, Catholicism's role in spreading empire, the post-liberation caste system imposed on mixed-marriage *mestizos*, *mulattos*, and *zambos* as labor by the "pure-blooded" *criollo* ruling class — but the emergence of today's racial and cultural mix now appears, in our increasingly multicultural, postracial country, like an unplanned triumph of humanity's better angels; consider it a fandango, or musical party, of sorts. Some photographic highlights: Casasola's 1910 portraits of female soldiers, Garcia's family portraits, and contemporary portraits by Almeida and Glenton. Explanatory materials are bilingual, as is the catalog (which features works not shown in Oakland). See web site for related events. *The African Presence in Mexico: From Yanga to the Present* runs through August 23 at the **Oakland Museum of California** (1000 Oak St., Oakland). MuseumCA.org or 510-238-2200.

— *DeWitt Cheng*

ART GALLERIES

ABCO Warehouse Space. Challenge of Vanishment Community art exhibit commenting on Oakland homicides. Through Dec. 28. 5315 Peralta St., Emeryville. ABCOWSpace.com.

Bedford Gallery. Working in Wax Juried exhibition curated by Karen P. Goldberg. Through June 21. **Working in Wax** National juried exhibition with waxed figurines. Through June 21. **Bedford Gallery Art Workshop** Presentation by juror Karen P. Goldenberg on the growing popularity of encaustic media. Coffee and pastries provided. Call 925-295-1417 to RSVP. Wed., June 10, 10 a.m. **Walking Tours of Civic Park: Public Art** Forty-five-minute docent-led tours. Sat., June 13, 11 a.m. $5. 1601 Civic Dr. (Dean Lesher Regional Center for the Arts), Walnut Creek. 925-295-1417. BedfordGallery.org.

Berkeley Art Museum. Human/Nature: Eradicate/Compost to a Sculpture Garden Exhibition explores relationship between human communities and the natural world. Featuring work by Mark Dion, Ann ... Ugo Rondinone ... Mariano ... Dario Robleto, ... and ... Through Sept. 27. 2625 Durant Ave. (UC Berkeley campus), Berkeley. 510-642-0808. BAMPFA.berkeley.edu.

Chris Kenyoth Studio. Chris Kenyoth Open Studio Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Continues through June 14. 1200 24th St., Oakland.

Dorado Holter Gallery. Soft Sculpture Featuring work by Emily Peters. Through July 8. 5829 College Ave., Oakland. 510-655-5052.

Craft and Cultural Arts Gallery. Freshly Cut Art made from scavenged materials by Sandy Bisbey and Daphne Ruff. Through June 26. 1515 Clay St. (State of California Office Building atrium), Oakland. 510-622-8290. OaklandCultureArts.org.

Dean Lesher Regional Center for the Arts. Public Art Tours Fifty-minute docent-led public art tours. Call 925-295-1417 to make reservations. Second Saturday of every month, 11 a.m. Continues through Aug. 29. **Public Art Tours** Fifty-minute docent-led public art tours. Call 925-295-1417 to make reservations. Second Saturday of every month, 11 a.m. Continues through Aug. 29. 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-943-7469. DLRCA.org.

Ecisnla Gallery. The All-Garts Show Sculpture, paintings, mixed media and photography by more than 30 female artists. Through June 20. **Edoastology: The Art Works of Kaibe McCann** Featuring ... Victorian images and recycled sculpture into her specimen creations ... "Lady Bugs" ... Discovery Lab ... a hands-on display of exotic creatures. June 20, 1-5 p.m. through June 20. 1020 ... Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. 510-984-7158. ... Gallery.com.

Ilias Sealhabla Studio. Ilias Sealhabla Open Studio Presenting paintings, pastels, watercolors, ... prints, and art ... Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Continues through June 14. 1124 Hollywood Ave., #1, Oakland.

Sculpture Hank. Beads and Bebrib: New Beads by Beads and Bebrib Urban landscapes inspired by graffiti and abstract expressionism. Reception June 27, 7-10 p.m. through June 28. 1985 Harmon St., Berkeley.

Rest Center. Beahinder With paintings by Philippe Janssens, plus sculpture and jewelry by Victoria Sveps. Through June 28. 1691 Cascais Pl., ... Oakland. 510-593-1707. TheRestCenter.com.

Gendot St. Art. Lamid Bike Open Gallery Portraits of politicians and contemporary pop culture figures. Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Continues through June 14. 204 Fourth St., Oakland.

Greenlining Institute. Beyond Boundaries Group show with painting, sculpture, photography, and collage. Through June 30. 1918 University Ave., 2nd Fl., Berkeley. 510-926-4036.

IEAS Warehouse Break. Mamma Sky: Reshaping the Art of Unique Zamg Artist and calligrapher ... traditional Mongolian aesthetic. Through July 15. 2223 Fulton St., sixth floor, Berkeley. 510-642-2809. IEAS.Berkeley.edu.

Johansson Projects. The Artist Hotis Vel ... and Michael Meyers present surreal sculptures and abstract cartography. Through June 28. **Jennifer and Kevin McCoy** Presenting multimedia work that

PICKS

East Bay Open Studios

More than four hundred Alameda and Contra Costa County artists are opening their studios to visitors on June 6-7 and 13/14; samples of their work, in all media and styles, are now on display at Pro Arts. If you're staycationing this summer, support your artist neighbors by perusing, schmoozing, and noshing (come for the cheese, stay for the broccoli). Check out the show, pick up a free directory with photos, web sites, and maps, and plan your excursions. Some show standouts: **Rebecca Garcia Gonzalez, Martin Webb, Deborah Barrett, Alicja Coe, Deborah Harris, Hadley Williams, Elena Zolotnitsky, Liz Maxwell, Bart Trickel, the Pfeiffer Sisters, Lisa Beerntsen, Vicky Mei Chen, Terry Furry, Benjamin Chan, Afton Badger** and **James Lovekin**. Several art-world denizens formulate measures this year, so decide for yourself if their eyes or heads need examining. *East Bay Open Studios* runs through June 14 at **Pro Arts Gallery** (550 2nd St., Oakland). ProArtsGallery.org or 510-763-4361. *— DeWitt Cheng*

Kristina Lewis, Rigging the Weather

Emergent Sea

Sea turtles in Oakland? No, but a mural of one at least, by Dan Fontes, Caroline Stern, and Jamie Swanson, has just been dedicated. It's on the Earth Metal Works building (976 23rd Ave.) where Calcot Place ends, near the Cotton Mills Studios. Painted with the assistance of Girls, Inc. under a grant from the City of Oakland Redevelopment Agency, the Earth turtle reminds us that the ecological emergency is linked to our current economic straits. Humans have caused many extinctions by overexploiting natural resources, and now even the noble ancient order of Chelonians, 200 million years old, is endangered by modernity — by fishing nets, boats, jet skis, oil spills, and the billions of synthetic jellyfish we excrete into our oceans yearly: i.e., plastic garbage. As you whiz north on 880 past 23rd Avenue in your fossil-powered street car (or something decidedly less carbon neutral), take a side, quick look, and consider adapting. What would clever monkeys do? 510-763-4374. *— D.C.*

Measure of Time

Susan Hyde Green, Ron Mandine Saunders, Sharon Wickham, and **Witold Winternheimer** are showing photographs on classic themes — the night sky, flowers, architectural interiors and urban landscapes, respectively — at **500 12th Street**, one of the Oakland Museum of California's satellite spaces. Green's color photos of full moons set against night skies ("Silver Shadow Reaching") recall paintings by *Ryder, Gottlieb*, and Still, but the foliage, or clouds, overdrawn in graphite, suggest abraded emulsions, or crystal-based tintypes and daguerreotypes. Saunders' sepia-toned photograms ("Solve," "Antlis"), made by exposing plants atop photographic paper to light without the use of a camera, also suggest early photography's mixture of scientific depiction and poetic realism, as do Wickham's small, monochromatic shots of vignetted stairways ("Secret"), buildings ("Haus"), and shadowy interiors penetrated by late afternoon light ("Morandi"). Winternheimer's color photos ("Billboard," "28th") find beauty and drama in the contemporary urban industrial landscape seen by night. *Measures of Time* runs through June 19 at 500 12th St., **Oakland**. MuseumCA.org or 510-238-6836. *— D.C.*

Rigging the Weather

Kristina Lewis explores the sculptural possibilities of common household objects like duct tape, drinking straws, zippers, needles, and magnifying glasses, transmuting them into oddly satisfying assemblages rich with suggestion. For this site-specific installation, she reassembled broken black umbrellas into a large central structure (or personage) accompanied by four smaller companions. She bundled the aluminum ribs into sprays that suggest palm fronds, windshield wipers, or rakes, or shrimps and spiders. She sewed the nylon wedges into large black flowers or sunbonnets that float above the spiders like hot air parade balloons above their tiny handlers. A game board composed of birch plywood triangles fits the lobby floor tiles perfectly, integrating these strange puppets into their lobby environment. *Richard Tuttle's* polygonal cloth wall pieces come to mind, as do George Rickey's swaying metal caliper arms or chopsticks, but the batlike, batty humor here belongs to Lewis. Through July 31 at **Oakland Museum Sculpture Court** (1111 Broadway, Oakland). MuseumCA.org/satellite or 510-238-6836. *— D.C.*

explores the conventions of filmmaking. Through June 27. 2300 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-444-9140. JohansenProjects.com.

John F. Kennedy University Arts and Consciousness Gallery, Graduate Exhibition 2009: Featuring work by nine graduates from the Masters in Transformative Arts and Masters in Fine Arts programs at JFK University. Closing reception Fri., June 19, 7-8:30 p.m. Through June 20. 2956 San Pablo Ave. (2nd floor), Berkeley. 510-649-0499. JFKU.edu/gallery.

Joyce Gordon Gallery, Landscapes of our Souls: Installation by Lorraine Roberts and Susan Almazol. Reception with the artists Thurs., June 18, 6-8 p.m. Through June 22. 406 14th St., Oakland. 510-465-8928. JoyceGordonGallery.com.

Kala Art Institute, [illegible]: Group show with new works in print media, paper sculpture, digital collage, photography, and video. Through June 27. 1060 Heinz Ave., Berkeley. 510-549-2977. Kala.org.

Laura Soltis Studio, Laura Soltis Open Studio: Presenting *Splendid Sunsets, Vivid Daydreams, and Squawking Bubblemen from Lake Merritt and Scenes Saved: In Emotions, Jews, Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists & Sikhs from Israel & India.* Sat., June 13, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. free. 2230 Lakeshore Ave. #B, Oakland. LauraSoltis.com.

[illegible] Gallery, [illegible] in Art: A Balanced Exhibition: [illegible] featuring graduating sculpture students from Cal State East Bay. Through July 15. 3000 Piedmont Ave., Oakland.

[illegible], Painting from a Deep Place: [illegible] brings the work of master painter Leigh Hyams, together with [illegible], Kate Stedman, Logan Payne, Sally [illegible], Eva Lyon, John Wood, and Jan Carey, joined by Adam Parsons in July. Art Murmur reception July 3, 7:00-10:00 p.m. Through July 11. 447 25th St., Oakland.

PhotoCentral Gallery and Darkroom, Bill Roberts: Five Decades of Photography: Through June 18. 1099 C St., Hayward. 510-881-6778. PhotoCentral.org.

Photolab Gallery, 5 Takes: Color photographs by [illegible] Bennett, Eric [illegible], Craig [illegible], Martha [illegible] and Ted Williams. Through June 27. 2235 Fifth St., Berkeley. 510-644-1400. Photolabgallery.com/gallery.htm

Pro Arts, East Bay Open Studios: Through June 14. 550 2nd St., Oakland. 510-763-4361. ProArtsGallery.org.

Richmond Art Center, [illegible]: Watercolors, mixed-panel drawings, and installations by Kurt [illegible], Gladys [illegible] and Betty Bailey. Through July 18. 2540 Barrett

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MOG

Ave. Museum. 510-871-6722. MemoryandArtCenter.org.

Sacred Rose Tattoo/SRI Gallery: Potatohead: The Art of Kirk Rynes Art inspired by comic books, cartoons, and punk rock, specifically the band Devo. Through July 30. 2720 University Ave., Berkeley. 510-883-1583. SacredRose.com.

San Pablo Arts Gallery: Hundred Commons Prints by Shaw Ann DeBoer and Celia Meining, plus ceramics by Karen Warner. Through June 14. Free. Museum ... 13831 San Pablo Ave. (Maple Hall, Civic Center), San Pablo. 510-215-3092. CI.SanPablo.ca.us.

Slate Gallery: *Here and There* Two artists' photographs ... Through June 27. 4770 Telegraph Ave., Oakland.

Studio One Art Center: Studio of the Muse Fine arts exhibit and sale with work by Marion Sober, Steve Hurst, Ari Handwood, Pablo Iattoi, Amy German, Jane Van Dusen, Ruth Brock, Sandra Goodman, Karen Gyetenen. Through June 13. 365 45th St., Oakland. 510-597-5027. www.oaklandnet.com/parks.

Susan Hunter: Open Studios Presenting handwrought jewelry and works on paper as part of Pro Arts East Bay open studios Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Continues through June 14. 2547 Eighth St., Studio 24-A, Berkeley.

Swarm Gallery: Solo exhibition by Joseph Smithman features prophets on paper plus sculpture installation and video exhibit on the contemporary landscape. Through June 21. **Dreamland** David Hodge and Hi-fin Hodge present video translations that ... editorial materials with new technology. Through June 21. 560 2nd St. #101, Oakland. 510-839-2787. SwarmGallery.net.

Trax Gallery: *Crème de la Crème: Semester Puts Exhibition* and workshop by Wanna Mackenzie. Opening reception Sat., June 13, 5-7 p.m. June 13-July 3. 1810 Fifth St., Berkeley. 510-848-0729. TraxGallery.com.

Uptown Body & Fender: Pro Arts East Bay Open Studios in Uptown Featuring work by Marsha Shillet, Jolié Bernstein, Pablo Book, Bill Christensen, Shad Ani Uptown, Boxer Tina, Rahad Honda, Yasuko Kaye, Yuko Bogner, Aiko Kobayashi Gray, Judy Levit, [illegible], Mitsuya [illegible], Lydia Gideon, Ziko Fujioka, Carol Tarzan, and Vivian Memory. Fridays, Saturdays. Continues through June 13. 401 26th St., Oakland. 510-251-6001.

Women's Cancer Resource Center: Titanium Berkeley work by [illegible] and [illegible] artists. Through June 30. 5741 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-601-4040 ext. 111. WCRC.org.

MUSEUMS

Berkeley Art Museum: Hundred or So Stars Blinking to the Naked Eye Through Aug. 30. **What We Are Like: The 39th Annual University of California, Berkeley Master of Fine Arts Graduate Exhibition** Featuring work by Sara Bright, Lydia Greer, Laura Bell Craig, Farley Gwazda, Aaron Malleta, and Ginger Wolfe-Suarez. Through June 21. 2626 Bancroft Ave. (UC Berkeley campus), Berkeley. 510-642-0808. BAMPFA.berkeley.edu.

The Chinese-American Experience in California: Forging the Contributions of the Bay Area Chinese Anthropology exhibit: a collection of artifacts from a San Leandro site. Through June 11. Free. Cal State East Bay, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward. 510-885-3000. www.csueastbay.edu/[illegible].

Chabot Space & Science Center: One Giant Leap: A Hands-on exhibit invites participants to Moon-walk, try on a space helmet, climb into a Mercury capsule, and land a lunar ... Through Dec. 31. $13.95-$14.95. 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

More Listings Online

Get info about dozens more SF art events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

Habitot Children's Museum: The ongoing exhibition of Roger Goldenberg's paintings, *Shell Game, The Big Eye vs. The Missing Person*. Daily. **Back to the Farm** Interactive exhibit where young ... can harvest apples, collect eggs in the big red barn, ride a horse, fish in the pond, and build with sustainable ... Through Sept. 15. 2065 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-647-1111. Habitot.org.

Museum of Children's Art: Pet Portraiture A ... of pets in mosaic. Daily.

California Mosaic Artists: Celebrating Memory Through Hundred An ongoing group show. Daily. 3091 Chapman St., Oakland. 510-437-9085.

Judah L. Magnes Museum: Memory Lab Interactive installation allows visitors to ... digital family albums and exhibitions based on their own documents, photographs, and memories. Daily. **Projections** Multimedia works from the museum's extensive collections of ... documentary, and experimental films. Daily. 2911 Russell St., Berkeley. 510-549-6950. Magnes.org.

Lacis Museum of Lace and Textiles: The World of the 1890s Fabulous displays of garments, linens, and laces in natural settings, plus Ellen Thompson's ... from the turn of the century. Through Aug. 1. 2982 Adeline St., Berkeley. 510-843-7290. LacisMuseum.org.

Lawrence Hall of Science: Science on a Sphere (SOS) New permanent exhibit features an animated globe. Watch ... form, hurricanes sweep across the oceans, and city lights glow across the planet. Daily. $8-$11. Centennial Dr. (above the UC Berkeley campus, below Grizzly Peak Blvd.), Berkeley. 510-642-5133. LawrenceHallofScience.org.

Museum of Children's Art: Once Upon a Time Celebrating the work of Don Freeman, author and illustrator of *Corduroy*, ... in the toy department of a big store. Through June 14. 538 9th St. (Suite 210), Oakland. 510-465-8770. MOCHA.org.

Museum of California: Painting Is the Ordinary Object Karen Ingersoll presents more than 40 of ... paintings. Through Aug. 23. **The African Presence in Mexico: From Yanga to the Present** Through the history and ... in Mexico from the 1500s. Exhibit covers the story of Yanga, a runaway slave rider, the abolition of slavery in 1829, the Mexican War of Independence, and 19th-century casta paintings. Through Aug. 23. **Sky of Sycamores: Sustaining Parklands in the 21st Century** Photographs by Jeff Jones and prose by retired National Park Interpretive Ranger William C. [illegible]. Through Aug. 23. **Architecture Tour of the Gardens and Museum** Sun., June 14, 1 p.m. Free. **The African Presence in Mexico Docent Tour** Sun., June 14, 2 p.m. $5-$8. 1000 Oak St. (at 10th St.), Oakland. 510-238-2200. MuseumCA.org.

Oakland Museum of California at City Center: The Art and History of Early California Exploring the story of California from Native American times to the Gold Rush. Daily. $5-$8. 1000 12th St., Oakland. 510-238-6036. MuseumCA.org.

Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology: From the Maker's Hand From the permanent collection, a selection of objects from China, Egypt, and Peru, plus locations in Africa, North America, and the Mediterranean. Daily. **Inside Out** The ... storage exhibition comprises some 500 objects from the museum's collection to ... Californian cultures. Daily. UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-643-7648. HearstMuseum.berkeley.edu.

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THEATER & DANCE

THEATER & PERFORMING ARTS

The Blue Dragon New play by Robert Lepage & Marie [illegible] explores the modernization of China using opera and visual media. Through June 13, 8 p.m., Sat., June 13, 2 p.m. $28. Zellerbach Playhouse, 2430 Bancroft Ave. [illegible] Berkeley. 510-642-9988, CalPerfs. Berkeley.edu.

[illegible] [illegible] Center Repertory Company [illegible] of the Broadway musical. [illegible] Saturdays, 8 p.m., Saturdays, Sundays, 2:30 p.m., Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Sundays, 7:30 p.m. Continues through June 27. $37-$48. Dean Lesher Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek, 925-943-7469. [illegible].org.

Faust, Part One Kevin Clarke and Mark Jackson adapt Jackson's interpretation of Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Faust, Der Tragödie Erster Teil*. Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m. Continues through June 28. $18-$25. The Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave. [illegible] 510-841-6500, ShotgunPlayers.org.

Lady Windermere's Fan Patrick [illegible] directs this [illegible] comedy by Oscar Wilde about the [illegible] explores public morality and private virtue. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sundays, 2:30 p.m. Continues through July 5. $18. Masquers Playhouse, 105 Park Pl., [illegible] 510-232-4031. Masquers.org.

[illegible] on the Nile Mystery play by Agatha Christie. Fridays, Saturdays, 8:30 p.m., Sun., June 14, 8 p.m., Thu., June 25, 8 p.m. Continues through June 27. $15, $35 for 3 plays, $17.50-$21 for students. [illegible] Starlight Village Players Theatre, 1 [illegible] Orinda, 925-253-1031.

Romeo and Juliet Jonathan Moscone directs the California Shakespeare Theater production of Shakespeare's famous tragedy. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sundays, 4 p.m., Tuesdays-Thursdays, 7:30 p.m., Sat., June 20, 2 p.m. Continues through June 21. $41-$58. Bruns Memorial Amphitheater, 100 Gateway Blvd. (off Highway 24 east of Caldecott Tunnel), Orinda. 510-548-9666, CalShakes.org.

Shortfired 2.0 Play writing competition in which the audience scores 8 short plays and decides which 4 will advance to the next round. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m. Continues through June 27. $15. Off-Market Theater, Studio 250 (965 Mission St.), San Francisco. 415-646-0776.

The Sound of Music Vagabond Players production of the famous [illegible] about the Von Trapp family and their [illegible]. Sat., June 13, 8 p.m., Sun., June 14, 3 p.m., Wed., June 17, 2 p.m. $15-$20. El Campanil Theatre, 602 West Second St., Antioch. 925-757-9500.

Three for a Party Staged readings of works by Gertrude Stein, Tennessee Williams, and Armistead Maupin by [illegible], by [illegible] Directed by Pada MacDougall and June Fisher. Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sundays, 3 p.m. [illegible] through June 21. $20-$35. Theatre Rhinoceros, 2926 16th St., San Francisco, 415-861-5079, TheRhino.org.

You, Nero Sharon Ott directs this comedy by Amy Freed about Nero, [illegible] and the fall of the Roman empire. Tuesdays, Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m., Wednesdays, Sundays, 7 p.m., Saturdays, Sundays, 2 p.m., Thu., June 11, 2 p.m., Thu., June 25, 2 p.m. Continues through June 28. $18.50-$71. Berkeley Repertory Theatre Roda Stage, 2025 Addison St., Berkeley, 510-647-2949.

DANCE PERFORMANCE

Luz Showcase in la [illegible] [illegible] Puerto [illegible] music and dance. Fri., June 12, 8 p.m. $12-$14. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568, LaPena.org.

[illegible] An evening of [illegible] visual dance [illegible] music featuring dances by Andrew Wass, [illegible] [illegible] & Diana Lara. Plus physical theater by [illegible] Pasadee, Ken Crowell, & Catherine Debon; music by the [illegible]. Sat., June 13, 8 p.m. $8-$15. [illegible] Sky Studio, 7547 Eighth St. (at Dwight Way), Berkeley. 510-524-4878.

Pacific/Dance Bare Dance Series [illegible] works-in-progress by choreographer [illegible] and guest choreographer [illegible] Hall, Sat., June 13, 5-7 p.m., $10. [illegible] 1881 18th St., Oakland.

LIVE VARIETY

[illegible] African drumming program. Wed., June 17, 10:30 a.m., free. Oakland Public Library, Martin Luther King Jr. Branch, 6833 International Blvd. [illegible] 510-615-5728. OaklandLibrary.org.

The Golden Gate Boys Show and Splitting Ears Concert Wed., June 17, 3:30-4:30 p.m., free. Oakland Public Library, Lakeview Branch, 550 El Embarcadero. [illegible] 510-238-7344, OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible], The Open Queen and Song Show Poetry and songs with Los Marcos Tres & Gaby Calendar. Thu., June 11, 8 p.m. $7-$10. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568, LaPena.org.

COMEDY

All-Pro Comedy Showcase Wednesdays, 8 p.m. $10, free for college students w/ ID. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus Ave., San Francisco, 415-928-4320, CobbsComedy.com.

Comedy Night Hosted by Tony Sparks. Thursdays, 7 p.m., free. [illegible] Cafe, 1122 Folsom St., San Francisco, 415-861-3663. [illegible].com.

Comedy Off Broadway With a rotating cast of [illegible] started in 1990, Comedy Central's Late Night Shows. For free visit ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Fridays, 8 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. $10. Washington Inn, 495 10th St., Oakland. 510-452-1776.

Comedy Open Mic w/ Jerry [illegible], Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., free. [illegible] Gallery and Lounge, 3200 [illegible] Ave., San Francisco, 415-[illegible], TheCornerGallery.com.

Comedy Showcase w/ Mist [illegible] Sign up at 7:30 pm. Mondays, 8 p.m., free. Rockit Room, 406 Clement St., San Francisco. 415-387-6344, RockitRoom.com.

Dobie Gutierrez Wed., June 17, 7:30 p.m., Thu., June 18, 7:30 p.m., Fri., June 19, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., Sat., June 20, 7 & 9:30 p.m., Sun., June 21, 7 p.m., $20-$30. Tommy T's Comedy & Steakhouse, 5104 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton. 925-227-1800.

Kirk Salter Thu., June 11, 7:30 p.m., Fri., June 12, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., Sat., June 13, 7 & 9:30 p.m., Sun., June 14, 7 p.m. $20-$30. Tommy T's Comedy & Steakhouse, 5104 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton. 925-227-1800.

Magic & Humor w/ Big Al Cohne & Faison Ford bring you an [illegible] theatre performance of magic and comedy [illegible]. Saturdays, 8 p.m. $20. Off-Market Theater, Stage 250 (965 Mission St.), San Francisco. 415-646-0776.

Comedy Show "Too Lips: SF97" Bonus show, Mondays, 9-10 p.m., $5. San Francisco Comedy College, 414 Mission St. #705, San Francisco. 415-921-2051, SFComedyCollege.com.

Open Mic Comedy presented by SF Standup. Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m., free. Annie's Social Club, 917 Folsom St., San Francisco, 415-974-1585. AnniesSocialClub.com.

Open Mic Comedy Night Wednesdays, 8:30 p.m., free. Englander Open Pub, 101 Parrott St., San Leandro. 510-357-3871. EnglanderPub.com.

Rasta & Love Comedy Showcase Fridays, 8 p.m. $7. Spud's Pizza, 3290 Adeline St., Berkeley. 510-597-0795. SpudsPizza.net.

SF Comedy Showcase Sundays, 8 p.m. $5. Punch Line, 444 Battery St., San Francisco. 415-397-4337. SFPunchlineComedyClub.com.

SPF7: The Laughingmouth Featuring a variety of improv, sketch, stand up, short films, & Shows guests. Thursdays, 6-8:37 p.m., $15. San Francisco Comedy College, 414 Mission St. #705, San Francisco. 415-921-2051, SFComedyCollege.com. ●

PICKS

East 14th Street: True Tales of a Reluctant Player

Don Reed could have turned his autobiography into a melodrama and gotten away with it. After all, the elements are there. His hustler father and fragile, penniless mother; the rich, befitting stepfather who cancels Christmas and makes everyone convert to a religion "that rhymes with 'Tohova's Stimussen;'" the brother who's a lady's man, and the other brother who "wants to be a lady." Combine that with the gritty environment of East Oakland in the 1970s, and you have a story that's already wonderful on its face. But Reed made it even better in his new one-man show *East 14th Street: True Tales of a Reluctant Player* by turning his childhood tragedies into side-splitting comedy. Using a sparse stage set and an era-appropriate funk soundtrack, he flits around the stage, doing spot-on imitations of his family and all the strange characters who populated that world. He takes people who could easily be objects of derision (pimps, prostitutes, religious zealots, and all form of low-class criminals), and makes them endearing. To watch that alchemy onstage is nothing short of amazing. Through June 14 at **the Marsh** (1062 Valencia St., San Francisco). 800-838-3006. TheMarsh.org — *Rachel Swan*

The Misanthrope

In his [illegible] en pointe adaptation of Molière's 17th-century comedy *Le Misanthrope*, Central Works director Gary Graves took the title character and put him in a new laboratory. Alan the misanthrope (Darren Bridgett) is a surly, Pepto-Bismol-swilling newspaper reporter who is honest to a fault. His improbable love interest is giddy, flirty Celia, a socialite who hosts parties with loud music and cocaine, and keeps a stable of young bachelors at her beck and call. Party-boy Phil (Michael Navarra) is Alan's competition. He drives a V4 Roadster that strikes Alan as a kind of phallic metaphor. Pared down from the source material, Graves' setup has the makings of a perfect love triangle. He spends the first half developing each of the characters, and the second half letting them try — and fail — to deceive one another. The drama unfolds deliciously, as social pretensions dissolve and motivations get revealed. By the end, we get to see how damaged and vulnerable everyone really is. *The Misanthrope* runs through June 21 at **Berkeley City Club** (2315 Durant Ave.). CentralWorks.org — *R.S.*

Romeo and Juliet

The [illegible] pool [illegible] just a [illegible] as Virgin Mary statue make an apt backdrop for Jonathan Moscone's new staging of *Romeo and Juliet*. Moscone made the play more accessible by mixing classical and modern elements, including Rihanna's pop-rock song "Shut Up and Drive," which plays during the Capulets' house party where Romeo first lays eyes on Juliet. Moscone cut about 20 percent of the script for this Cal Shakes production, but did it so elegantly that he didn't adulterate the language or alter the flow. What really makes this play work though are a couple clever casting decisions, namely the infectious Joel Williford, who gives Mercutio a bit of a frat boy edge, and Catherine Castellanos as the ribald but lovable nurse. These actors add vivacity and comic relief to what's otherwise a very grim-faced tale of woe. Through June 21 at **Bruns Amphitheatre** (100 Gateway Blvd., Orinda). 510-548-9666. CalShakes.org. — *R.S.*

Shortfired 2.0

The crew at PianoFight Productions knows how to pander to an audience accustomed to YouTube clips and rapid-fire status updates. Why subject those folks to a full-length, character-driven play when you can give them eight punchy shorts in about the same amount of time? Enter *Shortfired 2.0*, PianoFight's second playwriting competition, comprising two two-week rounds with eight plays per round. Audience members get to pass judgment and decide who advances to the next round. It's actually a tall order because the plays are all very well-written (and well-executed for that matter, by actors who have to learn four new plays every two weeks). They're smart, imaginative, and contemporary, using current slang and modern technological devices (e.g., people Tweet each other and have cell phones). Many of them use topical themes — such as wiretapping — to move the plot forward. Most come from relatively unknown writers, including some who have never [illegible] their work produced onstage. Yet there's nothing to mark them as amateurs. Were it not for the playwright bios, you'd probably never know. Through June 27 at **Studio 250** (Off Market Theaters, 965 Mission St., San Francisco). PianoFight.com — *R.S.*

KevinBerne.com

You, Nero

Berkeley Rep closes its 2008-09 season with Amy Freed's blistering comedy *You, Nero* about a notorious Roman emperor who just wants to be loved. Danny Scheie stars as the cute, supremely narcissistic, drama queen Nero who gallivants through his palace in a big medallion and leopard-print briefs. Jeff McCarthy is Scribonius, the has-been scribe who is forced to pen Nero's biopic, and with it, a huge cult of adoration. Susannah Shulman is Poppaea, Nero's beautiful and enterprising mistress, who has her own pretensions to power. It's a joyously campy production that mixes historical facts with modern pop-culture references. Freed's script is smart, fast-paced, and tricky, though a lot of the show's success owes to Sharon Ott's direction and Scheie's comic timing. Whenever he steps into a scene, you know it's going to be good. Through June 28 at Berkeley Repertory Theatre's **Thrust Stage** (2025 Addison St.). 510-647-2949. BerkeleyRep.org. — *R.S.*

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THEATER

THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT

Shotgun Players' *Faust* is a Gothic bromance with a beguiling devil

By Rachel Swan

Jessica Palopoli

Mark Jackson and Blythe Foster in *Faust: Part 1.*

Heinrich Faust, the professor who starred in Goethe's 19th-century drama *Faust: The Tragedy*, is a difficult character to portray. He's a Renaissance man who can expound for hours on medicine or theology, and deals in long passages from Grecian tragedy. He speaks in verse, using florid metaphors to describe his dissatisfaction with the world. He tires of academics and switches to magic, saying he can climb moonbeams and seduce nature. He lacks a solid moral compass but still has plenty of insecurities. Thus, he easily gets seduced by the idea of being useful to someone — namely, the devil.

It's no surprise that Faust would fascinate a director like Mark Jackson, who seems to enjoy working with characters whose ambitions get the better of them. (His recent credits include Shotgun Players' *Macbeth* and a wonderful staging of *Miss Julie*, which he directed for Aurora Theatre.) In his latest Shotgun Players production, Jackson re-envisions part one of Goethe's two-part tale. That's the part where Faust sells his soul to the devil in exchange for fulfillment of his every desire. What Faust desires, it turns out, is a young peasant girl named Gretchen.

Condensed from a nine-hundred-page script, Jackson's adaptation — co-directed by Kevin Clarke, who also designed the costumes — presents the story as a series of seductions: The devil Mephistopheles seduces Faust, Faust seduces Gretchen, and, in her own coy way, Gretchen seduces back. The violence of those interactions, coupled with Jackson's theatrical shock tactics, make this *Faust* more of a Gothic romance than a morality play. Distinct from its source material, the Shotgun Players production nonetheless preserves a lot of the language from the original text. Yet it's a decidedly Jackson-esque rendering, as much about power and desire as about choosing between good and evil.

Show Details
Faust, Part 1 runs through June 28 at the Ashby Stage (1901 Ashby Ave.). $18-$30. ShotgunPlayers.org

Jackson stars as Faust, and plays the character as an overly erudite geek who appears to suffer from some form of ADHD. Physically, he's good for the part. Jackson has a prominent Adam's apple and veins that all but pop out of his hands while he talks. He's tall and lanky, stiff during monologues but able to flit about the stage with Jim Carrey-like elasticity. In the opening scene he stands before a wall made of doors (either a portal to the eternal world or to his own mind) and delivers a long, flowery, extremely poetic speech about his discontentment. He despairs of other men with their intellectual pretensions and their "tinseled phrases." He claims to be bored with academia. He contemplates suicide. It's disorienting even if you're familiar with the play, partly because of the baroque language, and partly because Faust's thought process is so complicated. He's essentially giving us the whole back story of who he is and how he came to be, but in a stream-of-consciousness form rather than as a straight-on narrative. You might start wondering where all this is going.

Enter Mephistopheles (Peter Ruocco), the beguiling devil. In a scene that's every bit as tender as Faust's later flirtations with Gretchen (Blythe Foster), the two of them make a pact that would require each to be the other's servant — the devil will help Faust on earth and Faust, in turn, will be the devil's right-hand man in hell. Thus begins a strange kind of 19th-century bromance. (Jackson underscores the male-bonding theme by playing "This Magic Moment" in the background right after they sign a contract in blood.) We're led out of Faust's interior world and into a dark forest where beautiful Gretchen lives with her tetchy wheelchair-bound mother.

Trained at the Gardzienice Theatre in Poland and at Columbia University in New York, Foster has a ballerina's stature and a sweet, purring voice. Her Gretchen seems to gel emotionally with Faust, even if they're a bad match aesthetically. Gretchen charms Faust with her quaint German folk songs (exhumed from the original play). He dazzles her first with jewels, then with his elevated diction, then with his boarish embrace. They engage in a tense pas de deux, which climaxes with the odd, funny scene in which she asks whether he believes in God, and he deflects the question with another characteristically prolix speech. They repeat this exchange over and over again, at a crescendo.

As soon as Faust begins his courtship with Gretchen (using Mephistopheles as a wing man), we see the makings of both characters' undoing. Jackson choreographs their downfall beautifully. Ruocco's devil makes this game all the more perilous, and all the more fun to watch. He's constantly whispering in Faust's ear and delighting as the other characters make a mess of things. He watches bemusedly as Gretchen spins across the stage to show her emotional vertigo. At the end, after Gretchen gets burned and Faust seems on the verge of self-immolation, Mephistopheles is left standing. Paradoxically, he might be the play's real locus of morality. ●

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LECTURES & LIT

Owen Hill

The Southside Sleuth

Berkeley eccentrics animate Owen Hill's mysteries.

Clay Blackburn gets to prowl around strangers' houses and peek into their lives. He does this under the auspices of not just one but two different occupations. Blackburn, the bisexual Berkeley-based protagonist in a series of mysteries by poet/novelist **Owen Hill**, is a book scout. That is, he browses yard sales, estate sales, and other venues seeking secondhand volumes that he can sell for a profit. But he's also a private eye: very private, in that "I barely qualify. I don't have a license, don't carry a gun," Blackburn muses when about to meet a prospective client at the start of Hill's latest book *The Incredible Double*. Books are his main gig. "But sometimes I take these jobs."

The job driving this novel, which Hill will discuss at **Moe's Books** (2476 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley) on Monday, June 15, starts when a drugstore-chain magnate claims he's been getting snail-mail death threats with a Berkeley postmark and hires Blackburn to scope out their source. This magnate, whose not-so-subtle reference surname is Wally, "looked like Ross Perot but with hair ... Soap-opera hair, silver and sprayed." Sure, he's got his own crack security detail. "Gleaned from the Special Forces, mostly ... They captured Saddam, for heaven's sake," Wally boasts. But "Berkeley isn't Iraq," so he wants Blackburn, who knows this turf — because "Berkeley gives 'behind enemy lines' new meaning."

That's the first measure of a maze along which Blackburn hurtles with his trusty clutch of Berkeley regulars: a conspiracy theorist, an eloquent ex-druggie, and his best pal Marvin, whom he calls "my own personal Jiminy Cricket ... He's an unrepentant Communist, but it's easier for him. He owns his house."

Blackburn's bisexuality is remarkably rare in fiction. "Until recently," Hill says, "the 'bi' part of the gay-bi-transgendered coalition wasn't there. I had an agent tell me, 'There's a niche for gay, but not for this.' But I'm optimistic. Remember, Gore Vidal once said, 'Everyone is bisexual.' I like those demographics."

Writing about book scouting is easy for Hill, who has worked at Moe's for many years. He regularly assesses deceased persons' libraries they are offered up for sale by surviving relatives.

"Most people don't really know what their books are worth. They think they have 'rare' first editions." When they're wrong, "I try to let people down easy." When he does make a buy, "sometimes I feel like the smiling undertaker."

On the night of his reading, he'll share the mic with Summer Brenner, whose novel *I-5* is, like Hill's, new from Berkeley-based PM Press.

Although his eccentric characters are admittedly often based on real people, he says he's had "no complaints so far. When I use real names, it's out of respect — Edward Dorn, Joanne Kyger. The scenes I'm documenting are full of these offbeat interesting characters. Sometimes it feels like fish in a barrel. Any given day at Moe's I see enough characters to make up a novel." 7:30 p.m., free. MoesBooks.com

— *Anneli Rufus*

LECTURES

After The California Real Estate Crash: Timing the Real Estate Market Lecture by Robert Campbell. Wed., June 17, 6-8:30 p.m., free. Richmond Hotel, 6001 Regional St., Dublin. 925-833-7700.

Apartheid Radio Event Presentation on deportation at KPFA by [illegible], Jill Valley, and Miguel Gavilan Molina. Fund-raiser to replace Valley's camera. Sat., [illegible] p.m. [illegible] Café, 974 Pine St., Oakland.

Social Media Made Easy Lecture by strategist [illegible]. Sat., June 13, 10 a.m.-noon. $15 includes book. [illegible], El Cerrito.

LITERARY EVENTS

Albany Library Evening Book Group [illegible] facilitate this group, which features novels based on "the American experience." Third Wednesday of every month, 7-8 p.m., free. Albany Library, 1249 Marin Ave., Albany. 510-526-3720. AClibrary.org.

Autobiography and Memoir Book Discussion Group Third Tuesday of every month, 6:30 p.m., no cover. Hayward Public Library, 835 C St., Hayward. 510-293-8685. Library.hayward-ca.gov.

Bay Area Free Book Exchange Passing unwanted books to people who want them. Saturdays-Sundays, 5 a.m.-8 p.m. Continues through Dec. 1, free. Book Exchange, 10520 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. 510-526-1948.

Bilingual Storytimes for Children Saturdays, 11:30 a.m., free. Hayward Public Library, 835 C St., Hayward. 510-293-8685. Library.hayward-ca.gov.

Bilingual Storytimes for Children Saturdays, 11:30 a.m., free. Weekes Branch Library, 27300 Patrick Ave., Hayward. 510-782-2155. Library.Hayward-CA.gov.

California of the Past Digital Storytelling [illegible] people to record personal [illegible] stories. Daily. Free. Hayward Public Library, 835 C St., Hayward. 510-293-8685. Library.hayward-ca.gov.

Cheryl Wagner Discussing and signing *Plenty Enough Suck to Go Around*. Thu., June 11, 7 p.m., free. Diesel, 5433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9965. DieselBookstore.com.

[illegible] Literature Book Group Third Monday of every month, 7 p.m. Free. Barnes & Noble, 5604 Bay St., Emeryville. 510-547-0832.

David Carr Discussing *The Night of the Gun*. Tue., June 16, 7 p.m., free. Diesel, 5433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9965. DieselBookstore.com.

Road to Radio & Business Plan Business workshop. Sat., June 13, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Newark Library, 6300 Civic Terrace Ave., Newark. 510-795-2627.

Lakeview Book Discussion Group Third Monday of every month, 6:45-7:45 p.m. Oakland Public Library, Lakeview Branch, 550 El Embarcadero, Oakland. 510-238-7344. OaklandLibrary.org.

Lisa Jervis Reading from her new cookbook and food manifesto, *Cook Food*. Tue., June 16, 7:30 p.m., free. Moe's Books, 2476 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2087.

Luis Alberto Urrea Reading from *Into the Beautiful North*. Thu., June 11, 7:30 p.m. $5-$10. First Congregational Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. 510-848-3696.

Mary Pols Reading from her memoir *Accidentally on Purpose: The True Tale of a Happy Single Mother*. Thu., June 11, 7:30 p.m., free. Mrs. Dalloway's Literary and Garden Arts, 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-704-8222. MrsDalloways.com.

Matthew Crawford Discussing *Shop Class as Soulcraft*. Thu., June 11, 7 p.m. Free. Books Inc., 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226. BooksInc.net.

Middle East Student Group Call [illegible] at 510-601-2541 [illegible]. Saturdays, 3-5 p.m., free. Grand Lake Neighborhood Center, 530 Lake Park Ave., Oakland.

Music of the World/[illegible] Musical [illegible]. Fourth and Second Sunday of every month, 3:30 p.m., free. [illegible], 3200 Adeline St., Berkeley.

New Radio Road Downloads A new service offered through the library's improved web site. Features [illegible], an online reference librarian, catalogues and database access, search box, pull-down menus, and more. Daily. Oakland Public Library Main Branch, 125 14th St., Oakland. 510-238-3134. OaklandLibrary.org.

PM Press, Summer Brenner and Owen Hill Discussing Hill's *The Incredible Double* and Brenner's *I-5: A Novel of Crime, Transport, and Sex*, [illegible] of PM Press's new [illegible] series. Mon., June 15, 7:30 p.m., free. Moe's Books, 2476 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2087.

Preschool Storytimes: Stories, Songs, and Finger Plays for Children Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m., free. Oakland Public Library, Melrose Branch, 4805 Foothill Blvd., Oakland. 510-535-5623. OaklandLibrary.org.

Diesel, Scheidler's Students Read Their Work Featuring students from Scheidler's [illegible] workshop. Sun., June 14, 3 p.m., free. Diesel, 5433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9965. DieselBookstore.com.

[illegible] Reading James Joyce's *Ulysses* [illegible]. Tue., June 16, 1 p.m., free. Mrs. Dalloway's Literary and Garden Arts, 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-704-8222. MrsDalloways.com.

More Listings Online

Get info about dozens more literary events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

PICKS

Art House Gallery & Cultural Center Grand Opening

It's a [illegible] the Saturday, June 13 **Art House Gallery & Cultural Center** (2905 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley) grand opening. "Visionary Surrealism, Fantasy and Psychedelic Art" features works by Carrol Moore, Omar Mokhtari, Al Young, Richard Kreck, Luis Garcia, and many more, with a live show by Fells Fern. Bring potluck dish. Noon. $5-$10 donation. BerkeleyArtHouse.Wordpress.com — *Anneli Rufus*

Cheryl Wagner

When the going got tough — that is, after Hurricane Katrina — **Cheryl Wagner** and her pals stuck it out, refusing to abandon their beloved New Orleans, even though the storm had invaded every aspect of their lives. At **Diesel** (5433 College Ave., Oakland) on Thursday, June 11, *This American Life* contributor Wagner discusses her memoir *Plenty Enough Suck to Go Around*. 7 p.m., free. DieselBookstore.com — *A.R.*

Eduardo Galeano

Meeting Barack Obama recently, Hugo Chavez gave him a copy of **Eduardo Galeano**'s book *The Open Veins of Latin America*. Hailed by such notables as Howard Zinn and Subcomandante Marcos, Galeano discusses his new book *Mirrors: Stories of Almost Everyone* at the **First Congregational Church of Berkeley** (2345 Channing Way, Berkeley) on Friday, June 12. 7:30 p.m. $8-$15. KPFA.org — *A.R.*

Luis Alberto Urrea

In **Luis Alberto Urrea**'s novel *Into the Beautiful North*, a teenage taqueria worker hatches a plan to bring men to her Mexican village from which most males have departed, heading for the US border. Meet American Book Award winner and Pulitzer Prize nominee Urrea at the **First Congregational Church** (2345 Channing Way, Berkeley) on Thursday, June 11. 7:30 p.m. $10, $5 for students. BerkeleyArts.org — *A.R.*

PUBLIC INTEREST

Berkeley Liberty and Radio Serious Meeting Thursdays, 7 p.m., free. Long Haul, 3124 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-540-0751.

East Bay Brunch Exchange Coordinating Meeting Saturdays, 4-6 p.m., free. Long Haul, 3124 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-540-0751.

Food Stamp Program Third Tuesday of every month, 2:30-4:30 p.m., free. Oakland Public Library, Asian Branch, 388 9th St., Suite 190 (Pacific Renaissance Plaza), Oakland. 510-238-3400. OaklandLibrary.org.

Gray People United For people over 75. Fourth and Second Thursday of every month, 1:30 p.m., free. Berkeley Gray Panthers Office, 1403 [illegible] St., Berkeley. 510-548-9696.

SPOKEN WORD

Café Poetry Featured [illegible] and an open mic, [illegible]. Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Donations requested. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org.

Hella Book A night of poetry and spoken word. Thursdays, 8:30-11:30 p.m. Donations requested. [illegible] Cultural Center, 2277 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-533-6629.

[illegible] Poetry Diesel Poetry workshop and open mic [illegible]. Second Friday of every month, 7 p.m., free. [illegible] Café, [illegible] St., Berkeley. 510-841-8374.

[illegible] High School's 4th Branch, Original Student Museum Student-produced show to celebrate the school's third poetry anthology. Wed., June 10, 6 p.m. [illegible] La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org.

Open Mic with Paul May Thursdays, 7 p.m. [illegible] Community Center & Coffeehouse, 3303 High St., Alameda. 510-864-0606. [illegible].

[illegible] Fridays, 7:30 p.m., free. House of Unity, [illegible] Ave., Oakland. 510-430-9835.

Poetry Diversified A twice-monthly open mic with featured readers, hosted by poetry ensemble [illegible]. First and Third Tuesday of every month, 7:30-9 p.m., free. [illegible] Café, 3728 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-488-2133. [illegible].

[illegible] Saturday Prose & Poetry Reading Poetry reading and open mic. Second Saturday of every month, 7-9 p.m. Frank Bette Center for the Arts, 1601 Paru St., Alameda. 510-523-6957. FrankBetteCenter.org.

Spoken Word Open Mic A weekly Oakland open spoken-word session hosted by [illegible] at 7 p.m. [illegible] Fourth Thursday of every month. 7:30 p.m., free. Nomad Café, 6500 [illegible] Ave., Oakland. 510-595-5344. NomadCafe.net.

Thursday at Word Beat A weekly spoken-word and poetry gathering. Thursdays, 7 p.m., free. AngelFire.com/poetry/wordbeat. Mediterraneum Café, 2475 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-549-1128.

Student Word Art Open-Mic Night Poets, storytellers, musicians, and all other [illegible] are invited to share their work. Arrive early to sign up. Second and Fourth Friday of every month, 7:30 p.m., free. [illegible] Zocalo Coffeehouse, 645 [illegible] Ave., San Leandro. 510-569-0102. ZocaloCoffeehouse.com.

BODY&SOUL

Brush and Push

Paint Dancing brings together two seemingly disparate passions.

Put together tunes with a driving beat — funk, world music, hip-hop, electronica, R&B, reggae, house, blues, jazz — and nontoxic water-soluble paint in more than twenty different colors. Throw in a hefty supply of acid-free paper and a dance floor and what have you got?

It's **Paint Dancing**, an experiment in creative expression hosted on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month by Beth Hird and Zach Pine (the location of June 13's session will be revealed only to those who register). Some things you can't imagine doing at the same time. Reading and surfing. Sleeping and swordfighting. Ice-skating and surgery. Brushwork and footwork? Now that's multitasking.

Dancing helps us "to loosen up, to lose the mind, to come into more of a kinesthetic awareness, to paint with a body energy, a kind of joy and sense of play," says Hird, a painter and sculptor who studied at RISD, CCAC, the San Francisco Art Institute, and London's Slade School of Fine Art. "I'm pretty interested in somatic energy systems, and I find ... that dancing helps me to paint with a different kind of energy and awareness. I'm pretty sure painting does the same for dance. Applying paint to a surface," she explains, "is a very tactile, and sensuous experience." She likes seeing "that type of paying attention, that type of awareness or curiosity, being transmuted into another form, such as dance or music or writing."

A Paint Dancing session

One night two years ago, Hird was hosting a community dance group in her art studio. "The paint containers were still open. Someone asked if they could paint a painting while dancing. I said, 'Sure,' and then several people began to follow suit." She'd never thought of combining the two activities, but "the paintings were amazing to watch, a real synthesis of movement and energy and creativity." She and Pine — who DJs for Soul Sanctuary Dance every Sunday at Ashkenaz — hosted a few combo-sessions. Then they heard about Matt James, a Seattleite who had formed a nationwide series of Paint Dancing meet-up groups that donate part of their profits to charity. Hird and Pine decided to form an East Bay group; 25 percent of their profits go to the Alameda County Community Food Bank.

One of Hird's favorite aspects of Paint Dancing is "the wall," a large communal mural to which all participants can contribute. She finds it "incredible to watch the transformation of a huge blank four-by-twelve-foot space into — you name it — sometimes something completely abstract and wild, other times a theme which builds on itself and then morphs into unexpected dreamlike images and juicy colors, rhythmic shapes. Each week I'm amazed to watch it come into being, often with strangely cohesive elements, as if the music has some secret visual language it transmits." 8 p.m., $12-$25. Art.Meetup.com/336/Calendar/10482307

— *Anneli Rufus*

PERSONAL GROWTH

Celebrate Recovery A weekly meeting [illegible] life-changing principles. Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. Creekside Community Church, 851 MacArthur Blvd., San Leandro. 510-430-0651. CreeksideCommunity.org.

Classical Dependency Workshops A weekly workshop for users, friends of users, parents of users, and children of users. Topics rotate weekly. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-noon, free. Alta Bates Summit Medical Center Health Education Center, 400 Hawthorne Ave., Oakland. [illegible]

[illegible] Group Daniel Jenkins, Ph.D. facilitates this weekly discussion group, [illegible] Saturdays, 10 a.m.-noon, $10. [illegible] 554 Grand Ave., Oakland. [illegible]

Food for Thought Readings by Berkeley psychic Jessica Rabbit. Thursdays, 5-7 p.m., $10. Gravity Feed Gallery, 1858 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-644-4484.

Mandana Community Recovery Center Friday Night Meditation Meditation posture and breath techniques, chakra exploration, and different styles of meditation. Fridays, 8-9 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. Free for Mandana CRC members, $3 for nonmembers. Mandana Community Recovery Center, 3908 [illegible] St., Oakland. [illegible]

Mandana Community Recovery Center Sunday Education Presentations A different holistic or spiritual topic that can help with addiction recovery is discussed each week. Sundays, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Free for Mandana CRC Members, $3 for nonmembers. Mandana Community Recovery Center, 3908 Howe St., Oakland. 510-[illegible]

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

Adventures @ Jewish Exploring Multi-session lecture series. Thursdays, 10:15 a.m.-noon. Continues through Dec. 31. $7, [illegible] for a 15-lecture series. Temple Beth Sholom, 642 Dolores Ave., San Leandro. 510-357-8505. TempleBethSholom.org.

Quest Curriculum Tuesday Nights Courses open to everyone, but highly recommended for people interested in membership. [illegible] in the church. An optional [illegible] dinner at 6 p.m. will precede worship (7 p.m.) and programs (7:30 p.m.). Call for schedule. Tuesdays, 7 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. Mandana Unitarian Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Berkeley. 510-525-0302. UUCB.org.

LGBT Meditation Group [illegible] meditation [illegible] E-mail [illegible] Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31, free. East Bay Meditation Center, 2147 Broadway Ave., Oakland. 510-268-0696. EastBayMeditation.org.

Personal Theology Seminars Guest speakers every week. Sundays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Continues through Dec. 31, free. Mandana Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Berkeley. 510-525-0302. UUCB.org.

Silent Meditation The Tibetan bell is rung at 12:15 p.m., calling for silence, and rung again at 12:40 p.m. to end it. Wednesdays, Thursdays, 12:15-12:45 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. Mandana Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Berkeley. 510-525-0302. UUCB.org.

Thursday Dynamic Date Curriculum Programs Exploring Unitarian Universalist Theology, first Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. Exploring Prayer and Spiritual Practices for Unitarian Universalists, second Thursdays, 7:30 p.m., Exploring Mandana Universalist Heritage and Tradition, third Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. Exploring World Religions, fourth Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. Exploring Theological Perspectives, fifth Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. Thursdays. Continues through Dec. 31. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Berkeley. 510-525-0302. UUCB.org.

Worship Pastor D. John Oyewole leads a weekly service at a multi-ethnic church where everybody is somebody and Christ is Lord. Sundays, 9 a.m. Continues through Dec. 31. 510-[illegible] Agape Bible Fellowship, 2565 19th St., San Pablo. 510-233-8881. AgapeBFM.org.

YOGA & BODYWORK

Butch-Trans-Genderqueer Yoga Taught by Max Miller, a butch-trans yoga teacher with a 200-hour certification in Anusara. Miller wishes to create a safe space for those in his community to practice yoga. Mondays, Thursdays, 6-8 p.m., $6-$12 sliding scale, no one turned away for lack of funds. 510-541-0441. UrbanForage.com. Studio Naga, 5850 San Pablo Ave., Emeryville. 510-652-0707. StudioNaga.com.

InterPlay as a Life Practice Cynthia Winton-Henry and other InterPlay leaders lead an ongoing class on moving, breathing, improvising, and playing. Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m. $10-$15. InterPlace, 2273 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-465-2797. InterPlay.org.

Tai Chi, Meditation, and Qigong With Jeffrey Kessler. Thursdays, 5 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. $58-$77 per [illegible] Chochmat Halev, 2215 Prince St., Berkeley. 510-704-9687. Chochmat.org.

PICKS

Catholic Mass Music

Get swept away with the music of the Catholic Mass, as sung from the Middle Ages through the Early Baroque, in a **concert** by the Chamber Singers of the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium *Musicum* at **St. Paul's Episcopal Church** (114 Montecito Ave., Oakland) on Friday, June 12. The student group performs the works of Guillaume de Machaut, Josquin des Prez, and others. 8 p.m., donations accepted. HRCM.net — *Anneli Rufus*

Chamber Singers of the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum.

Prosperity Workshop

[illegible] worried about money? If your you're probably is wrong about it now. Feel the need for a little help from the cosmos? At the **Oakland Center for Spiritual Living** (5000 Clarewood Dr., Oakland) on Monday, June 15 and June 22, **SoulPreneur: Passion & Prosperity** is a two-session workshop focusing on ways to turn dreams into [illegible] [illegible] — *A.R.*

Meher Baba Discussion

[illegible] of [illegible] born [illegible] mystic known [illegible] as Meher Baba [illegible] silence. But that didn't keep him from being a self-described avatar and spiritual leader to hundreds of thousands worldwide. At the **Meher Baba Center** (6023 Stockton Ave., El Cerrito) on Monday, June 15, his discourses will be **discussed**. 7:30 p.m. MeherBabaMeherBa[illegible] — *A.R.*

Tapas and Nirvana

[illegible] Spanish appetizers, tapas is the term yogis use for the inner fire that burns away impurities. At **Piedmont Yoga Studio** (3966 Piedmont Ave., Oakland) on Saturday, June 13, longtime teacher Mary Paffard leads "**Tapas and Nirvana**," a three-hour workshop on tending and controlling that inner fire with postures, meditation, and more. 1:30 p.m., $75. PiedmontYoga.com — *A.R.*

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AQUARIUM AGE

A TIME FOR ACTION AND INDULGING SEXUAL URGES

For the week of June 10-16, 2009

By Rallee Finn

Daily life is still off-the-charts busy this week, and it's not just because Mercury Retrograde is over and everyone is still making up for lost time. All the planets are engaged, and that translates into action which could turn the days as well as the nights hectic. These astral interactions are a smorgasbord of potentialities, running the range from the deeply esoteric to the deeply erotic. The good news is that because there is so much going on, no one will be left out—there is definitely something for everyone.

The ongoing conjunction of Neptune/Jupiter/Chiron continues, but this week there is a new dimension to consider. The Sun trines all three planets, a position that further amplifies the idealism of that conjunction. Much has been written about this conjunction, and while I am thoroughly on board for the "higher" frequencies of this signature, I am also aware (as many of you are as well) that in order for a true transformational shift in consciousness to occur, what is unconscious must be identified, its role recognized, and then its power integrated. It's not just simply a matter of wishing the economy would recover. It is fundamentally a matter of analyzing what went wrong, not in an effort to restore the old pattern, but to find an antidote for the toxicity of the failed system in order for a new model to be created. So while the Sun's trine to this altruistic conjunction may illuminate its idealistic essence, what the Sun may also do is illuminate the repressive, callous shadows that impelled us to this collective moment in history. Again, true change begins with the individual, which means each of us has the power to change our participation in the old paradigm. Baby steps do not necessarily mean useless or ineffectual steps. Also keep in mind, Mercury continues to square Jupiter/Neptune/Chiron, which could make clarity an issue.

The good news is that Mercury also continues to sextile Uranus, supporting creative, innovative ways of thinking about all varieties of subjects and situations.

The best news this week is the ongoing Venus/Mars conjunction. Both are in Taurus, the Sign of sensuality and sexuality, and as the gods of love and sex continue to form a perfect union, mortal libidos are sure to go off the charts. Venus and Mars have been traveling in tandem for several weeks so this may not be news for you, but this week (as well as last week) they have both been in a trine to Pluto, a positive alliance that is most commonly interpreted as a proclivity toward procreation (or at least *trying* to). If you are not so inclined, the power of this trine can be aimed at creative and artistic endeavors, but it will take a Herculean effort. That being said, Pluto's presence clearly indicates transformation is possible. So while it may be difficult not indulging those sexual urges, this trine can be used to make powerful personal shifts. (Hmmm ... how do you spell "tantra"?)

If you know your Ascendant and/or your Moon Sign, read that, too.

ARIES The hustle and bustle of the week continues to focus on opportunities to make money and nail down the details of specific plans and projects. Even if there are setbacks, don't despair — you're building your future.

TAURUS The Venus/Mars conjunction is making you extremely attractive to a wide variety of people, all of whom may have "plans" for your success. Enjoy the attention, and be determined to maintain your inner clarity.

GEMINI Your efforts to create and maintain your inner strength are paying off. Continue to be determined to hold a steady stance, and you'll be surprised at your capacity to stay calm.

CANCER Think about what's said, but don't let any particular bit of information become a brain worm. Yes, certain interactions could be disturbing, but friends and significant others can also be a source of great joy.

LEO The emphasis is on your career and there are opportunities for tangible, actual gains. Leave your ego at the door, stay focused on the biggest possible picture, and allow the situation to unfold.

VIRGO Resist the tendency to be hypercritical and instead transform your talent for finding the flaw into an eye that refines. You may think I'm splitting hairs, but a positive approach will make a real difference.

LIBRA Do your best to balance realism with idealism, and you'll find the key to taking practical steps toward actualizing your goals. While it sounds like an oxymoron, there is nothing wrong with pragmatic dreams.

SCORPIO Whether you're currently partnered or not, passionate encounters could spark innovative ideas about relating. Try thinking of relationship as a verb rather than a noun, and you'll stay open to the possibilities.

SAGITTARIUS The emphasis continues to be on work and money, as opportunities to improve your circumstances improve. Don't be shy about sharing your ideas — you might be surprised by the positive reception.

CAPRICORN You're on a powerful journey that requires your full attention, and while the temptation to tune out is great, it would be wiser to stay present.

Yes, it's a challenge — but you're up to it.

AQUARIUS There's huge potential for excitement, but that doesn't mean you have to be at the center of every event. Fun is great, but it can also be exhausting. Honor your need for rest, and you'll have a much better time.

PISCES Heartfelt conversations stimulate your creative flow. No matter how busy you may be, do not ignore these inspirations. You will eventually find the time to bring them to life. ●

For More Info

Rallee Finn specializes in Transformational Astrology. For readings, call 1-888-937-9264, write P.O. Box 343, New York, NY 10025, visit AquariumAge.com, or e-mail Rallee@AquariumAge.com. Copyright © 2009 by Rallee Finn.

SUBCULTURES

BEST OF THE EAST BAY 2009

In the era of social networking, satellite radio, and DIY everything, there is no more mass market. There are only smaller and more numerous subcultures. In *Subcultures*, our 2009 Best of the East Bay we'll focus on the people, places, companies, and subcultures that make the East Bay so culturally diverse and intellectually rich. From the perfect place to find vegan sweets, to the club DJ who's playing the latest beats, we'll celebrate niche culture in all its glories. Raiders fans. Gaming clans. Rock climbers. Hip-hop rhymers. Obama shinees. Urban wines. Meat eaters. Twitter and Tweeters. These are the tribes of the East Bay in 2009. And they've got a home in Best of the East Bay.

OFFICIAL BALLOT RULES

All ballots must be received by **Monday, June 22**. Only one per person. Duplicate ballots reflecting slate voting or identical handwriting will be discarded, and ballot authors disqualified. Ballots must have votes in at least 25 categories. Only ballots with valid address information will be considered. Vote online at EastBayExpress.com or mail this form or a photocopy to: *East Bay Express*, c/o Best Of, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA 94607

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Best lingerie
Best manicures and pedicure
Best men's clothing
Best motorcycle shop
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Best gay bar
Best Indian/Pakistani restaurant
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Best pizza
Best salads
Best sandwiches
Best seafood restaurant
Best Southern/soul food
Best steaks
Best teahouse
Best tiki bar
Best Thai/Burmese restaurant
Best vegetarian/vegan restaurant
Best Vietnamese/Cambodian restaurant
Cheapest drinks

PEOPLE & PLACES

Best charity
Best city employee
Best college hangout
Best college professor
Best community organizer
Best company to work for
Best K-12 teacher
Best local innovator
Best new cause
Best pick-up spot
Best place to take the kids
Best place to worship
Best rising political figure
Best student club or group
Best under-21 hangout

SPORTS & LEISURE

Best adult softball league
Best athlete (amateur)
Best athlete (pro)
Best baby yoga
Best boating store
Best California casino
Best California ski resort
Best cycling store
Best health club/gym
Best marina
Best outdoor store
Best Pilates studio
Best place to play board games
Best spinning instructor
Best sports memorabilia store
Best pool hall
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Best category we didn't think of (and winner)

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THE ZEN OF FUSION COOKING

A new restaurant in Alameda takes a multi-culti approach, with mixed results

By Matthew Stafford

Fusion cooking is nothing new. (Back in his standup days in the early Sixties, Dick Cavett told a joke about a trendy new Chinese-German restaurant where the only problem is that an hour later you're hungry for power.") I myself am perfectly happy with any fresh culinary configurations that restaurateurs want to throw at me; recently it's gotten to the point where it seems like every other dinner is some form of Californian-cuisine mish-mash.

Zen, a new multicultural sort of hangout on the island of Alameda, features pan-ethnic cookery that would seem to be just the palate-distracting ticket. Japan is represented on the menu by sashimi, enoki, and yakitori. The fettuccini and carpaccio of Italy share kitchen space with Hawaiian lomi lomi and Korean kimchi. British fish and chips, Chinese fried rice, Portuguese clams and sausage, and a positively Gallic seafood gratin complete with baguette are prominently advertised. And how about that grilled rib-eye, the Greek feta, the Caribbean ceviche? The kitchen's sheer zest for mixing and matching is endearing and occasionally successful, but at other times a certain lack of focus and balance overwhelms the dishes themselves. To paraphrase old Rudyard, the gustatory twain just doesn't seem to meet.

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Sample Menu

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Zen Melt	$13
Kimchee Fried Rice	$7
Kakuni Pork	$7

The restaurant is located near the busy intersection of Park and Santa Clara in an enviable neighborhood that houses a Korean market, popular ice cream parlor, cafes, and saloons. A granite-slab fountain and a large Buddha greet diners at the entrance, and the striking interior is done almost entirely in blood red and black, with a few dozen white rose and red paper lanterns adding festive accents. The tables are set with attractive plates, bowls, and saucers in a variety of shapes and sizes, and the deeply comfy banquettes against the wall inspire a pleasantly relaxed attitude.

Zen describes itself as a small-plates establishment, but the platters are plenty big enough to share, despite their minimal price tag — less than a third of the menu items are more than $10. One of the best was the vermicelli, in which the tender, slender noodles captured the diverse flavors of mango, garden greens, and roast duck to delicious effect. *Mentaiko*, the salted Japanese pollock roe usually eaten with rice, added plenty of zip to an especially cross-cultural (and absolutely yummy) spaghetti dish dressed with garlic, onions, enoki mushrooms, and parmesan. And the kimchi fried rice, a gloriously greasy bowl of home-style short grains ribboned with onions, beef, and bracingly pickled radish, was spicy, tangy, hearty, and comforting all at once.

Other dishes weren't as successful. The zen melt sounded intriguing — ahi, *tobiko*, avocado, and Swiss cheese on ciabatta bread — but in the end it was just another tuna melt with a bit of crunch, agreeable but nothing special. The chicken gizzard yakitori, two skewers of rock-hard gristle with the flavor of especially sooty carcinogens, wasn't agreeable at all. The best thing about the fish and chips were the Asian fries, thick fingers of taro and sweet potato wrapped in a light, crunchy tempura-like coating, but the panko-crusted sole filets were as skinny, bland, and heavy as a package of defrosted fish sticks. But while the *kakuni* pork belly wasn't braised long enough to give it the lush, silky texture the dish demands, it was sweet and tender overall, and the *wakame* seaweed salad offered a bright, sesame-strewn contrast to the menu's preponderance of starch and salt.

The roast duck vermicelli is a highlight of the menu

Chris Duffey

Like the religion itself, Zen doesn't necessarily embrace the concept of vegetarianism, and there are barely enough meat-free dishes on the menu to see the devout through an evening's noshing. Edamame is available to kick off the meal and there are three standard salads in addition to the seaweed sesame variety, but you can always fill up on the taro/sweet potato fries, which are also served on their own, Belgian-style, in big paper cones.

There's a minimal yet affordable eleven-item wine list as well as five varieties of sake and five kinds of beer (including Yebisu and Sierra Nevada), but the bar's primary function is the shaking up of sake- and soju-based cocktails. Nineteen are on the menu and range from the standard (lemon drop, cosmo, mojito) to the imaginative (the Tropical Paradise, a bracing mango-pineapple-passion-fruit elixir) to the downright intimidating (the Oyster Shooter, also a glass of sake bolstered with ponzu, *tobiko*, scallions, a quail egg, and a raw oyster).

After the vivid flavors of the savory dishes, there's an unexpected homogeneity to the desserts that's reminiscent of the stuff served at a hotel banquet. Despite the advertised presence of dark, white, and milk chocolate, the triple chocolate mousse tastes creamier than cocoa-y, offering none of the endorphin-like pleasures of the real thing. The fried banana is equally undistinguished: more soggy than crisp, although the accompanying green tea ice cream adds a welcome bit of zest. While the mango soleil cake has a mildly bracing mango-passion fruit mousse at its center, the dessert overall is as pleasant and forgettable as the others. And if Zen's meal-closers don't inspire you, around the corner and up the street is Tucker's Ice Cream in all its forty-flavor soda fountain super-creamed glory. What better way to finish off a Chinese-Italian-Japanese-Korean meal than with a hot fudge sundae with a cherry on top? ●

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RESTAURANTS & CAFES

This guide only lists restaurants recommended by Express food critics. You can find complete reviews for all of these restaurants at EastBayExpress.com. Our print listings rotate regularly, as space allows. Our complete Dining Guide is available online, where it is searchable by neighborhood, cuisine, price and more. Price codes assume diners will order a main course and beverage, share appetizers and desserts, and tip adequately. $—up to $10 per person $$—$10-$25 $$$—$25-$50 $$$$—more than $50.

RICHMOND & NORTH

Garlyn's Hot Pot [illegible] 3288 Pierce St. (in the Pacific East Mall), Richmond, 510-524-8081. (Chinese) $-$$

[illegible] 3600 San Pablo Dam Rd., El Sobrante, 510-223-8801. (Central American) $

Hunter's Custom Meats 3600 San Pablo Ave. Suite B, Hercules, 510 724-2300 (Barbecue/Deli) $

Little Angel's 5815 Potrero Ave., El Cerrito, 510-[illegible]-8979 (Steak House) $$-$$$

Marylou's Homemade Delights 1572 Sycamore Ave. Suite I, Hercules, 510-245-1100 (Filipino) $

Pho Hoa Thai [illegible] San Pablo Ave., Richmond, 510-[illegible]. (Vietnamese) $-$$

Pizza Garibaldi 250 23rd St., Richmond, 510 234-1052 (Mexican/Peruvian) $-$$

Samsong Thai 3288 Pierce St., #A111 (in the Pacific East Mall), Richmond, 510 558-5131 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $

[illegible] 1581 Sycamore Ave., Unit E (in the Creekside Center) Hercules 510-245-3000 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

Sweet Los Palmas Parking lot of 550 23rd St., Richmond (Mexican) $

El Tapatio 610 23rd St., Richmond, 510-215-0009 (Mexican) $

[illegible] 14011 San Pablo Ave., San Pablo, 510-215-7513 (Central American/Salvadoran) $

Wan Thai 840 Willow Ave., Hercules, 510-799-0800 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $$

ALBANY, KENSINGTON & BERKELEY-SOLANO

B-Organic on Solano 1473 Solano Ave. Albany, 510-528-4237 (California Cuisine/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

Ajanta 1888 Solano Ave., Berkeley 510-526-4373 (Indian/Pakistani/Organic/Sustainable) $$

Al's Big Burger 477 San Pablo Ave. Albany, 510-52[illegible]-573 (Diner) $

Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers 1591 Solano Ave. Berkeley 510-526-8185 (American/Burgers/Sandwiches) $

Bua Luang 1166 Solano Ave. Albany, 510-527-8288 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $

Bot 1647 Solano Ave. Berkeley, (510) 528-6876 (Vietnamese) $$

Cactus Taqueria 1881 Solano Ave. Berkeley 510-528-1881. (Mexican/Organic/Sustainable) $

Fatapple's 7525 Fairmount Ave. El Cerrito, 510-528-3433 (Bakery/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner) $-$$

Ici 2948 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-665-6054 (Bakery/Desserts/Ice Cream/Organic/Sustainable) $

Jerusalem's Organic Kitchen 1607 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley 510-725-7068 (Middle Eastern/Organic/Sustainable) $

[illegible] 1440 Solano Ave. Berkeley 510-526-2513 (Indian/Pakistani) $$

Lao-Thai Kitchen 1496 Solano Ave. Albany, 510-559-3028 (Cambodian/Laotian/Southeast Asian/Southern/Soul Food/Thai/Burmese) $

[illegible] 1588 Solano Ave. Albany 510-525-1350 (Trendy/Organic/Sustainable) $$-$$$

Renee's Place 1477 Solano Ave. Albany, 510-525-2330 (Chinese) $-$$

Vanessa's Bistro 1715 Solano Ave. Berkeley 510-525-8300 (Tapas/Small Plates, Vietnamese) $$

[illegible] Chicago Pizza 1853 Solano Ave. Berkeley 510-525-5950 (Pizza) $-$$

BERKELEY-NORTH

Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers 1600 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley 510-849-2827 (American/Burgers/Sandwiches) $

Cafe Gratitude 1730 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley 415-824-4652 (Organic/Sustainable, Vegetarian/Vegan) $$

Casa Latina 1805 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-558-7177 (Bakery/Mexican) $

[illegible] Restaurant 1840 Euclid Ave. Berkeley, 510-543-1600. (Modern) $-$$

Cesar 1515 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-883-0220. (Spanish/Tapas/Small Plates) $$

Cha-Ya 1686 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-981-1353. (Japanese/Sushi/Vegetarian/Vegan) $$

Corso 1788 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-704-8004 (Italian) $$$

[illegible] 1674 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley, 510-843-[illegible] (Chinese/Desserts/Ice Cream) $

Fatapple's 1346 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley 510-526-2260 (Bakery/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner) $-$$

[illegible] [illegible] Street at [illegible] Avenue (North Berkeley Farmers' Market), Berkeley (Mexican/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Gioia Pizzeria 1586 Hopkins St., Berkeley 510-528-4692 (Organic/Sustainable/Pizza) $

Guerilla Cafe 1620 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley 510-845-2233 (Breakfast/Brunch/Organic/Sustainable) $

[illegible] Taqueria 1311 B Shattuck Ave. Berkeley 510-546-4811 (Mexican) $

Saul's Restaurant and Delicatessen 1475 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley 510-848-3354 (Deli/Kosher/Jewish/Organic/Sustainable) $$

Top Dog 2503 Hearst Ave. Berkeley 510-843-1241 (American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Organic/Sustainable) $

BERKELEY-DOWNTOWN

Alborz Persian Cuisine 2142 Center St., Berkeley 510-848-8877 (Middle Eastern/Persian) $$

Angeline's Louisiana Kitchen 2261 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley 510-548-6900 (Southern/Soul Food) $-$$

Arinell 2119 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley 510-641-4695 (Pizza) $

[illegible] Thai Cuisine 1458 University Ave. Berkeley 510-848-6410 (Thai/Burmese) $

Bobby G's Pizzeria 2072 University Ave. Berkeley 510-665-8866 (Organic/Sustainable/Pizza) $-$$

Brazil Fresh Squeeze Cafe 2161 University Ave. Berkeley, 510-845-8011 (Brazilian/Deli/South American) $

[illegible] Cafe 1902 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-[illegible] ([illegible]/Small Plates) $

[illegible] Center Street at Martin Luther King Jr. Way (Downtown Berkeley Farmers' Market) Berkeley (Mexican/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Henry's 2600 Durant Ave., Berkeley 510-845-8352 (California Cuisine) $$

Jayakarta 2026 University Ave. Berkeley 510-841-6644 (Southeast Asian) $-$$

[illegible] Smokehouse 2190 [illegible], Berkeley 510-849-0873 (Barbecue) $-$$

[illegible] International Sports Cafe 2060 University Ave. Berkeley, 510 705-1450 (American/Breakfast) $$

[illegible] Thai [illegible] 1923 University Ave. Berkeley [illegible] 548-1089 (Thai/Burmese) $-$$

Pie in the Sky 2124 Center St., Berkeley 510-848-8078 (Pizza) $

[illegible] 2042 University Ave. Berkeley, 510-704-0126 (Central American) $-$$

[illegible] 1523 University Ave., Berkeley 510-841-2148 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $$

Top Dog 2160 Center St., Berkeley 510-848-1116 (American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Organic/Sustainable) $

[illegible] Gourmet 2021 University Ave. Berkeley 510-665-4350 ([illegible]) $$

Venus 2327 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley 510-540-5950 (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$$

BERKELEY-WEST & EMERYVILLE

900 Grayson 900 Grayson St., Berkeley 510-704-9900 (California Cuisine) $$

The Bread Workshop 1398 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-5740 (Bakery/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $

Bucci's 6121 Hollis St., Emeryville, 510-547-4725 (California Cuisine/[illegible]/Organic/Sustainable) $$$

Cafe Clem 2700 Seventh St. #100, Berkeley 510-204-9087 (French) $

[illegible] 1320 65th St., Emeryville, 510-923-0416 (Mexican) $$

Doyle Street Cafe 5515 Doyle St., Emeryville 510-547-2050 (Breakfast/Brunch/Diner) $

Indian Village 1970 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510-548-5099 (Indian/Pakistani/[illegible]) $

[illegible] 2057 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510-705-8463 (Caribbean) $

Lanesplitter Pizza and Pub 2033 San Pablo Ave. Berkeley 510-845-1652 (Pizza) $

[illegible] 1300 40th St., Emeryville, 510-[illegible]-8586 (Vegetarian/Vegan) $

[illegible] 1142 40th St., Emeryville, 510-923-0321 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

Priya Indian Cuisine 2072 San Pablo Ave. Berkeley, 510-644-3077 (Indian/Pakistani) $-$$

Sea Salt 2512 San Pablo Ave. Berkeley 510-883-1720 (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Seafood) $-$$$

Sketch 1809A Fourth St., Berkeley 510-665-5650 (Dessert/Ice Cream) $

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RECENTLY REVIEWED

Chick-O-Pea's

1296 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-540-8884. Falafel are ostensibly street food, but you wouldn't want to wolf a Chick-O-Pea's falafel while striding down the street because you owe it more than that. Each bite bursts juicy-chewy-crunchy-hot, then yields a sneaky slow sophisticated spice charge on the double-take. Packed into a thick soft house-baked pouch, it's not really street food but the sort of hybrid that could be conceived only in Berkeley: sit-down street food. Worth the trip to this 100-percent vegetarian eerie is Chick-O-Pea's falafel/salad bar, where nine or more exotic, house-made Lebanese-style toppings can be ladled or perched into falafels, into falafel burgers, and atop organic baby greens. Shoestring fries come in five flavors, but the "pita fries" — fried strips of leftover bread — are a guilty pleasure that goes well with a serving of smoky hummus, or baba ghanoush. $

Barlata

4901 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-450-0678. This friendly bustling Temescal hangout has the relaxed vibe of a Barcelona cafe, and chef-owner Daniel Olivella's three dozen tapas keep things authentically Iberian: a tasty Spanish omelet ribboned with chorizo; lamb meatballs with an earthy chocolate-tomato sauce, three different gazpachos in fluted glasses; slow-cooked fideo pasta served in a glittering sardine can. The perfunctory seafood paella is worth skipping, but the desserts — particularly the grilled chocolate brioche sandwich with creme catalana — are delectable. Affordable and eclectic all-Spanish wine list. $$

E-Z Stop Deli

2033 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-848-9344. The hardworking, soft-spoken sandwich-makers at E-Z Stop build tall substantial towers. The size of the sandwiches and the friendliness of the staff evoke times of yore, that gentle generosity of delis in the era before Subway, when confident countermen asked gently, "All the trimmings, miss?" and sliced onions with bravura and spread to sure. The fourteen-ounce avocado-and-cheese sandwich is a can't-fit-your-mouth-around-it block comprising an entire avocado, several thick slices of cheese, and fistfuls of raw produce. A seventeen-ounce egg-salad sandwich, black-pepper bits spiking its silky smoothness, soars four inches tall. These are master-class sandwiches: plainly exquisite, exquisitely plain. $

Grub N Go

2009 Allston Way, Berkeley 510-540-5282. Closed on weekends and popular with students, Grub N Go serves regular sandwiches along with baked potatoes and hot sandwiches. The latter, such as the lofty, melty, rich, thirteen-ounce "Mushroom Mozzarella" and colossal eighteen-ounce "Vegetarian" — bursting with roasted eggplant, roasted squash, roasted red peppers, cheese, handfuls of spinach, and three different mustards — qualify as three-course meals. Outdoor umbrella tables make for a nice break on a sunny day. $

Picán

2295 Broadway, Oakland, 510-834-1000. This striking yet sultry new Uptown destination serves classic Southern cooking with an upscale California flare: hash, silky she-crab soup; fried chicken drizzled with truffle-infused organic honey; matchlessly tender barbecued ribs with peanut-jalapeño coleslaw; a towering root beer float with sassafras ice cream. The handsome setting is all high ceilings, earth tones, and Old South elegance, and the friendly bar pours the Bay Area's finest selection of single-barrel bourbons. $$$$

Raw Energy

2050 Addison St., Berkeley 510-665-9464. Because Raw Energy has no inside seating and just one tiny outdoor table — the food is prepared mostly to order inside a tiny kitchen and served through a window by Naiem and his wife and son — it is virtually a take-out-only operation. Naiem makes the crust for his raw "pizza" by sprouting wheat berries for three days, then dehydrating them for another eighteen hours. He tops the crust with layers of avocado, alfalfa sprouts, julienned red cabbage, carrot ribbons, tahini, and vegan Parmesan "cheese." Sensibly, it releases an explosion of textures as the flavors register: Sweet. Earthy. Creamy. Bright. Raw tomato soup is thicker, spicier, and slightly warmer than tomato juice, and milks — made with powdered walnuts and flavored with your choice of vanilla, carob, or fruit — teeter on the verge of entrées (because they're high-protein) and desserts (because they're rich and sweet). Think a raw meal won't fill you up? It will. $

Beta Lounge

2104 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-845-[illegible]. This sleek little wine bar boasts an ambient minimalism that belies its proto-IKEA design scheme. The brief and inexpensive wine list is supplemented with beer and an interesting menu of sake cocktails, as well as a dozen or so largely satisfying nosh-sized filled-to-bursting spring rolls with coconut-peanut dipping sauce; a platter of artisan cheeses with fresh fruit and baguette; sandwiches of roasted turkey and ripe avocado on warm focaccia, homey slabs of ciabatta pizza topped with mozzarella, roasted peppers, and eggplant. Ciao Bella gelato in three varieties is available for dessert. $$

647-2300. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$$

Andy and Becky's Thai Cuisine Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market (Derby St. at Martin Luther King Jr. Way), Berkeley 510-548-3333. (Organic/Sustainable/Thai/Burmese/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Breads of India 2448 Sacramento St., Berkeley 510-848-7684. (Indian/Pakistani/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

Cafe Muse 2625 Durant Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-4366. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Cafe Valparaiso 1835 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-841-2800. (South American) $$

Crixa Cakes 2748 Adeline St., Berkeley, 510-548-0421. (Bakery/Cafe/Coffeehouse) $-$$

Shen Hua 2914 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-883-1777. (Chinese) $-$$

Sweet Adeline Bakeshop 3350 Adeline St., Berkeley, 510-601-6303. (Bakery/Cafe/Coffeehouse) $-$$

top dog 2534 Durant Ave., Berkeley 510-843-5967. (American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Organic/Sustainable) $

OAKLAND-ROCKRIDGE

À Côté 5478 College Ave., Oakland, 510-655-6469. (California Cuisine/French/Italian/Organic/Sustainable/Spanish/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers 5819 College Ave., Oakland 510-601-0444. (American/Burgers/Sandwiches) $

Cactus Taqueria 5642 College Ave., Oakland 510-658-6180. (Mexican/Organic/Sustainable) $

Citron 5484 College Ave., Oakland, 510-653-5484. (Breakfast/Brunch/California Cuisine/French) $$$-$$$$

Flavors of India 5251 College Ave., Oakland 510-658-2481. (Indian/Pakistani) $$

Garibaldi's 5356 College Ave., Oakland, 510-595-4000. (California Cuisine/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

Khana Peena 5316 College Ave., Oakland 510-658-2300. (Indian/Pakistani) $$

[illegible] [illegible] College Ave., [illegible] 510-652-[illegible]. (Japanese/Sushi) $$-$$$

Noodle Theory 6099 Claremont Ave., Oakland 510-595-6988. (Asian Fusion/California Cuisine) $-$$

Soi4 Bangkok Eatery 5421 College Ave., Oakland, 510-655-0889. (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $$

Somerset 5912 College Ave., Oakland 510-428-1833. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/California Cuisine) $$

top dog 5100 Broadway (inside Longs Plaza), Oakland, 510-601-1127. (American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Organic/Sustainable) $

Wood Tavern 6317 College Ave., Oakland, 510-654-6607. (California Cuisine) $$-$$$

Zachary's Chicago Pizza 5801 College Ave., Oakland 510-655-6385. (Pizza) $-$$

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OAKLAND-TEMESCAL

Addis Ethiopian Restaurant 6130 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-653-3456. (African/Ethiopian/Eritrean) $$

Andy and Cindy's Thai Cuisine Sunday Temescal Farmers Market, Oakland. 415-812-8100. (Organic/Sustainable/Thai/Burmese/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Aunt Mary's Cafe 4307 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-601-8227. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Southern/Soul Food) $-$$

Bakesale Betty 5098 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-985-1213. (Bakery/Cafe/Coffeehouse) $-$$

[illegible] 5001 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-450-0678. (Spanish/Tapas/Small Plates/Wine Bar) $$$

La Calaca Loca 5199 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-601-8228. (Mexican) $

Lanesplitter Pizza and Pub 4799 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-653-5350. (Pizza) $

The Mixing Bowl 4920 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-655-5880. (California Cuisine) $$

Ohgane Korean Restaurant 3915 Broadway, Oakland. 510-594-8300. (Korean) $$-$$$

Oakland B.B.Q. Oakland Town 5101 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-595-5338. (Korean) $-$$

Pizzaiolo 5008 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-652-4888. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Pizza) $$-$$$

Sahn Maru 4315 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-653-3366. (Korean) $-$$

Yet Kal Za Jang 4390 Telegraph Ave., Suite 1, Oakland. 510-652-3659. (Chinese/Korean) $

Yuen Za Jang 5015 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-653-2286. (Chinese/Korean) $

OAKLAND-PIEDMONT, GRAND LAKE & EAST

Andy and Cindy's Thai Cuisine Oakland Grand Lake Farmers Market, Oakland. 415-812-8100. (Organic/Sustainable/Thai/Burmese/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers 4162 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-655-7180. (American/Burgers/Sandwiches) $

Bay Wolf Restaurant 3853 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-655-6004. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$$

Blackberry Bistro 4240 Park Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-1088. (Breakfast/Brunch/Southern/Soul Food) $-$$

Camino 3917 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-547-5035. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$$

César Piedmont 4039 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-883-0222. (Spanish/Tapas/Small Plates) $$

[illegible] 4125 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-655-1024. (French) $$

Di Bartolo 3308 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-238-8578. (California Cuisine) $$-$$$

[illegible] 3314 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-645-4512. (Japanese/Sushi) $$

[illegible] 4070 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-547-3444. (French) $$

Oakland Submarine Sandwiches 2080 Alford Ct., Oakland. 510-339-2720. (American) $

[illegible] Ethiopian Restaurant 4301 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-428-1528. (African/Ethiopian/Eritrean) $

Z Cafe and Bar 2135 Broadway, Oakland. 510-663-7985. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/California Cuisine) $$

OAKLAND-DOWNTOWN & JACK LONDON SQ

B Oakland 499 9th St., Oakland. 510-251-8770. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$

[illegible] 978 54th St., Oakland. 510-251-2733. (Organic/Sustainable/Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $

Battambang Restaurant 850 Broadway, Oakland. 510-839-8815. (Cambodian/Dietary Seafood/Southeast Asian/Vegetarian/Vegan) $-$$

[illegible] 338 12th St., Oakland. 510-893-0438. (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $-$$$

House of India 548 12th St., Oakland. 510-834-7884. (Indian/Pakistani) $-$$

Cock-a-Doodle Cafe 719 Washington St., Oakland. 510-465-5400. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Cafe/Coffeehouse/California Cuisine/Nuevo Latino/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

[illegible] Oakland Restaurant 781 Webster St., Oakland. 510-832-2881. (Chinese/Seafood) $-$$

Home of Chicken & Waffles 444 Embarcadero West, Oakland. 510-836-4446. (American/Southern/Soul Food) $

[illegible] 442 16th St., Oakland. 510-452-1104. (Japanese/Sushi) $$$$

Luka's Taproom & Lounge 2221 Broadway, Oakland. 510-451-4677. (Belgian/California Cuisine/French) $$-$$$

[illegible] 155 3rd St., Oakland. 510-825-1350. (Southern/Soul Food) $$

[illegible] 100 15th St., Oakland. 510-444-8426. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Soizic 300 Broadway, Oakland. 510-251-8490. (California Cuisine) $$$

Spice Monkey 1628 Webster St., Oakland. 510-250-7970. (California Cuisine) $$

Spices 3 369 12th St., Oakland. 510-625-8889. (Chinese) $$

Tamarindo Antojeria Mexicana 468 8th St., Oakland. 510-444-1944. (Mexican/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

[illegible] 499 14th St., Suite 12, Oakland. 510-875-[illegible]. (American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Seafood/Soul Food) $

Uncle Willie's Bar-B-Que and Fish 614 14th St., Oakland. 510-465-9200. (Barbecue) $-$$

Yoshi's 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland. 510-238-9200. (Japanese/Sushi) $$$

ALAMEDA

Acquerello 1544 Bridge St., Alameda. 510-523-2220. (Italian) $$$

Angel Fish 883 Island Dr., Suite C-2, Alameda. 510-748-0480. (Japanese/Sushi) $-$$

Asena 2508 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda. 510-521-4100. (California Cuisine/Greek/Turkish/Organic/Sustainable) $$

BarCelona 2319 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda. 510-521-1600. (California Cuisine) $$$

[illegible] 2311 Central Ave., Alameda. 510-769-9933. (Diner) $

[illegible] 2334 Central Ave., Alameda. 510-[illegible]. (Vietnamese) $-$$

[illegible] 1440 Park St., Alameda. 510-769-9041. (Mexican) $$

[illegible] a Table 2319 Central Ave., Alameda. 510-814-0179. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/California Cuisine) $-$$

The New Zealander 1430 Park St., Alameda. 510-769-8555. (Brewpub/English/Irish/New Zealander/Organic/Sustainable) $

Ole's Waffle Shop 1507 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2888. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner) $

Otaez Restaurant 1619 Park St., Alameda. 510-521-9090. (Mexican) $

Pappo 2320 Central Ave., Alameda. 510-337-9100. (California Cuisine) $$$

Sushi House 1428 Park St., Alameda. 510-865-1462. (Japanese/Sushi) $$

OAKLAND-EAST

Ba Le 1509 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-261-9690. (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

Cafe Hanoi Restaurant 700 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-444-2500. (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

[illegible] 2107 8th Ave., Oakland. 510-238-8819. (Cambodian/Laotian/Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $

[illegible] 3015 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-533-0588. (Mexican) $

[illegible] Cafe 1238 7th Ave., Oakland. 510-835-1488. (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

New Pagoda 820 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-465-0836. (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $-$$

Phnom Penh House 3412 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-482-8008. (Cambodian/Laotian/Southeast Asian) $

[illegible] 2291 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-534-8088. (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $-$$

[illegible] 3829 Foothill Blvd., Oakland. 510-538-8188. (Barbecue) $

Tiki Tom's 308 29th Ave., Oakland. 510-532-9262. (Hawaiian) $

Full Reviews Online

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HAYWARD & SAN LEANDRO

[illegible] 30107 Mission Blvd., Hayward. 510-276-2530. (Italian) $-$$

[illegible] 917 B St., Hayward. 510-297-1021. (Italian) $$

[illegible] 1200 MacArthur Blvd., San Leandro. 510-895-0807. (Asian Fusion/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

[illegible] Korean Bar-B-Q Restaurant 27305 Mission Blvd., Hayward. 510-886-7702. (Barbecue/Korean) $$

The Hayward [illegible] 2071 [illegible] Blvd., Hayward. 510-537-5022. (American/Seafood/Steak House) $$$

Hong Kong BBQ Restaurant 24919 Redwood Rd., Castro Valley. 510-889-8688. (Chinese) $

L&L [illegible] 27326 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward. 510-[illegible]. (Barbecue/Hawaiian) $

[illegible] 2036 [illegible] St., San Leandro. 510-352-0905. (Mexican) $$

[illegible] 804 B St., Hayward. 510-538-9948. (Mexican) $$

[illegible] 925 B St., Hayward. 510-538-5881. (American/Diner) $

Golden Phoenix Restaurant 1292 Davis St., San Leandro. 510-568-4795. (Asian) $-$$

Thai Satay 1376 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-351-2345. (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $-$$

[illegible] Restaurant 271 Parrott St., San Leandro. 510-357-6000. (Vietnamese) $$

Yet Kal Za Jang 22532 Foothill Blvd., Hayward. 510-888-5822. (Chinese/Korean) $

FREMONT, NEWARK & UNION CITY

[illegible] 40851 Warm Springs Blvd., Fremont. 510-656-0988. (Chinese) $$-$$$

Chaat Cafe 3954 Mowry Ave., Fremont. 510-796-3400. (Indian/Pakistani/Tapas/Small Plates) $-$$

[illegible] 33330 Alvarado Niles Rd., Union City. 510-471-0207. (Indian/Pakistani) $-$$

De Afghanan Kabob House 37405 Fremont Blvd., Fremont. 510-745-9599. (Afghan/Middle Eastern) $-$$

Habibi Restaurant 2905 Washington Blvd., Fremont. 510-[illegible]. (Kosher/Halal/Middle Eastern) $-$$

Kinder's Custom Meats 43391 Boscell Rd., Fremont. 510-440-1110. (Barbecue/Deli) $

L&L Hawaiian Barbecue 1600 Decoto Rd. (at the Union City Marketplace), Union City. (510) 324-8838. (Barbecue/Hawaiian) $

[illegible] 1173 Decoto Rd., Union City. 510-487-9188. (Chinese) $

Mirchi Cafe & Masala Pizza 40900 Fremont Blvd., Fremont. 510-[illegible]. (Indian/Pakistani/Pizza) $

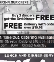
[illegible] Mala Hot Pot Restaurant 2069 Mowry Ave., Fremont. 510-792-2888. (Chinese) $$

Salang Pass 37480 Fremont Blvd., Fremont. 510-795-8999. (Afghan/Kabob/Halal/Middle Eastern) $$

PLEASANT HILL, CONCORD & EAST

[illegible] 4375G Clayton Rd., Concord. 925-686-9118. (Peruvian/South American) $-$$

[illegible] 2008 [illegible] Blvd., [illegible]. 925-880-5488. (Afghan/Persian) $



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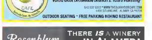

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WINEAU

A Different Shade of Pink

No blush in this batch of rosés, but how about beige, magenta, and persimmon?

This week we continue our journey into the pink, inspired by a recent controversy over the European Union's proposal to allow wine producers to blend red and white wines together and call the result *rosé*. France objects, and so does at least one reader, who gave the blending concept a big "Yuk!" She suggested a blind tasting of mass-market blends versus rosés made through the traditional practice of maceration, which involves contact between the skins of red grapes and their juice. Problem is, then we'd have to taste those often sickly-sweet wines, so this week we're sticking with old fashioned rosés.

Frey Vineyards Natural Rosé from Mendocino ($9.50) is a nonvintage organic wine with several things going for it, but its unfortunate pinkish-brown color isn't one of them. Don't let that scare you off, because then you'll miss a delightful aroma of citrus and tropical fruit, especially guava, a light, dry taste, and a strong finish. This is pretty bold for a rosé, and would be refreshing on a hot summer's day. Although I'm a fan of wines made from organically grown grapes, I've been resistant to those that earn organic certification thanks to the lack of chemicals added during the winemaking process. Such wines have always tasted a little wangy to me, and most winemakers I know think the limitations imposed by organic certification requirements are too stringent. But with this wine, in all but color, Frey is somehow making it work.

I expected similar gumption from the rosé bearing France's Fat Bastard label, but that's not what I found. The **2008 Fat Bastard Rose ($10.99)**, made from an even split of Shiraz and Grenache grapes grown in the Languedoc region, was at least a true pink, but its bold color struck a discordant tone with its muted bouquet. This underwhelming aroma suggested berry and a little peach, and the dry, acidic mouthfeel was a bit thin. "Pleasant enough" is how I'd sum it up.

One other thing that this week's wines have in common is that they can't run far enough away from the dreaded association with White Zinfandel, that 1970s California creation that tainted rosé's reputation in this country. But there's certainly no mistaking any of these wines for a Sutter Creek blush. In the case of the **2007 Dry Rose of Zinfandel ($9.99)** from Sonoma's Pedroncelli Winery, the producer even had enough confidence in its craftsmanship to put the *Z* word proudly on its label. Pedroncelli has a long history in the Dry Creek Valley and is well respected for its lush and budget-friendly red zins. But this salmon-colored wine was quieter than one might expect from a maker of wines known for their richness. It also was sweeter than expected, especially in the finish. The winery's other value wines are worth a try, however — we've heard good things about the **Mother Clone Zinfandel ($11.95)**.

Blair Campbell

For retail availability, visit EastBayExpress.com

E Plum Brewing Company and Alehouse 2151 Salvio St., Suite L, Concord. 925-687-4053. (American/Brewpub) $-$$

[illegible] 2203 [illegible] Ave., Pleasant Hill, 925-[illegible]. [illegible] $$

Hollywood Pizza, Pasta & More 1000 [illegible], Concord. 925-521-0000. (Italian/Pizza) $

Kinder's [illegible] Meats 2224 Monument Blvd., Pleasant Hill. 925-798-2333. [illegible] $

Kinder's [illegible] Meats 1120 Monte Madison Way, Concord. 925-676-8000. (Barbecue/Deli) $

Kinder's [illegible] Meats 5414 Lone Tree Way #187, Brentwood. 925-308-7000. (Barbecue/Deli) $

L&L Hawaiian Barbecue 800 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill. (925) 691-3151. (Barbecue/Hawaiian) $

L&L Hawaiian Barbecue 5411 Lone Tree Way #120, Brentwood. 925-634-5386. (Barbecue/Hawaiian) $

La [illegible] 2301 [illegible] Rd., Concord, 925-603-8110. (Mexican) $$

La Tour [illegible] [illegible] St., [illegible] Pacheco Sq.), Concord. 925-[illegible]. (Italian) $$-$$$

Lucy's Asian [illegible] 2500-A Sand Creek Rd. (in the Sand Creek Crossing mall), Brentwood. 925-516-8108. (Asian Fusion/Chinese/Japanese/Sushi) $$-$$$

Mikkiso Eatery & Wine Bar 1927 Oak Park Blvd., Pleasant Hill. 925-944-0400. (Tapas/Small Plates/Wine Bar) $$-$$$

Los [illegible] [illegible] Rd., Concord. 925-[illegible]. (Mexican) $

[illegible] 2955 [illegible] Blvd., [illegible], Concord. 925-[illegible]. (Mexican) $

WALNUT CREEK

[illegible] Grill & Restaurant 1485 Newell Ave., Walnut Creek. 925-210-0870. (Eastern European) $$

[illegible] 1342 Broadway Plaza, Walnut Creek. 925-938-3464. (American/Steak House) $$$$

[illegible] 1507 N. Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-407-8899. (French/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

Breads of India 1358 N. Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-256-7684. (Indian/Pakistani/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

[illegible] 1458 [illegible], Walnut Creek. 925-287-1588. (Chinese) $-$$

[illegible] 1498 Newell Ave., Walnut Creek. 925-930-4883. (Deli) $

[illegible] 1530 [illegible] St., Walnut Creek. 925-939-4555. (California Fusion/Cuban/Nuevo Latino) $$

[illegible] 1512 Locust St., Walnut Creek. 925-932-9898. (Vietnamese) $$

[illegible] 1833 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek. 925-953-9300. (Barbecue/Deli) $

[illegible] 1213 [illegible] Way, Walnut Creek. 925-938-2428. (Deli/Takeout) $

[illegible] 1510 N. Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-287-9188. (Chinese) $$

The [illegible] 1408 S. Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-935-7456. (Seafood/Beauty/Deli) $$

[illegible] & [illegible] Bar 1511 [illegible], Walnut Creek. 925-979-1100. (Martin Fusion/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Tapas/Small Plates/Wine Bar) $$-$$$

LAMORINDA

Market Cafe 2 Theatre Sq., Suite 105, Orinda. 925-254-5290. (Greek/Turkish/Middle Eastern) $

Bo's Barbecue 3422 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. 925-283-7133. (Barbecue/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

[illegible] 20 Bryant Way, Orinda. 925-254-2981. (American/Steak House) $$-$$$

Chow 53 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. 925-962-2469. (American/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$

[illegible] 3580 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. 925-283-0639. (Peruvian) $-$$

La [illegible] Ristorante 100 Lafayette Circle, Suite 101, Lafayette. 925-284-6782. (Italian) $$-$$$

[illegible] 1 Camino Sobrante, Suite 1, Orinda. 925-253-9852. (Chinese) $

Lily's [illegible] 3586 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. 925-284-7588. (Chinese) $$-$$$

Pizza Antica 3600 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. 925-299-0500. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Pizza) $$-$$$

FOOD & WINE

CULINARY & WINE

[illegible] Beer and Wine Market Organic beer and wine, and a silent auction. [illegible] June 12, 4-8 p.m. $25 for 5 tastes, $20 for 10. [illegible], 1875 South Bascom Ave., Campbell. 831-423-7200.

[illegible] Factory Tour [illegible], followed by a Q&A. Wednesdays, Saturdays, 11:30 a.m. & 2:30 p.m. [illegible] Chocolate Factory Store and Chocolate Bar, 6529 Hollis St., Emeryville. 510-652-4412. CharlesChocolates.com.

[illegible] Around the World: [illegible] Tour of Markets, [illegible] [illegible] travel and cookbook collections. Wed., June 10, 6-7:30 p.m. Free. Oakland Public Library, [illegible] St., Oakland.

[illegible] and Winemaker [illegible] Wine tasting to commemorate Haeger's book *Pacific Pinot Noir: A Comprehensive Winery Guide for Consumers and Connoisseurs*. Thu., June 11, 6:30-8 p.m. Vintage Berkeley Wine Shop, 2113 Vine St., Berkeley. 510-665-8600.

[illegible] Factory Tours Call 510-[illegible] to make reservations. Daily, free. [illegible], 914 Heinz Ave., Emeryville. [illegible].

[illegible] Wednesdays Complimentary wine tastings and wine by the glass for only $6. Second Wednesday of every month, 5-8 p.m. [illegible] Gallery, 5411 62nd St. (Ste. B), Emeryville. 510-[illegible]. [illegible].com.

FARMERS' MARKETS

[illegible] Farmers' Market Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. [illegible] Center, 15600 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-357-0000. [illegible].com

Concord Farmers' Market Thursdays, 4-8 p.m., Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Todos Santos Plaza, Willow Pass Rd. and Grant St., Concord. 925-671-3464.

[illegible] Market Wednesdays, 3-6:30 p.m. 510-848-1704. EcologyCenter.org. [illegible] Community Center, [illegible] Park, 2800 Park St. (at Bergen St.), Berkeley. 510-[illegible]. [illegible]

Irvington Farmers' Market Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Bay St., at Fremont Blvd., Fremont.

[illegible] Market Located at the [illegible] the Main Hospital. Thursdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Kaiser Permanente, 39400 Paseo Padre Pkwy., Fremont.

Kaiser Permanente Hayward [illegible] Market At the main entrance to the hospital. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. [illegible] 27400 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward.

Kaiser Permanente Oakland [illegible] Market Fridays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Kaiser Oakland, 3600 Howe St., Oakland.

[illegible] Market On the cafeteria patio. Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Kaiser Walnut Creek, 1425 South Main St., Walnut Creek.

Kensington Farmers' Market Sundays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. ACE Hardware Parking Lot, 303 Arlington Ave., Berkeley.

[illegible] Market Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. [illegible], Laurel [illegible], Oakland. 510-[illegible].

North [illegible] Farmers' Market Thursdays, 3-7 p.m. Free admission. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. [illegible] at Rose St., Berkeley.

[illegible] Farmers' Market Fridays, 4-8 p.m. Continues through Oct. 28, free. Park Pl. (at Washington Ave.), Richmond.

San Leandro [illegible] Farmers' Market Wednesdays, 4-8 p.m. Parrott St., [illegible] E. 14th St. & Washington Ave., San Leandro.

San Lorenzo Farmers' Market Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Hesperian Blvd. at Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo.

Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. MLK Civic Center Park, 2151 Martin Luther King Jr. Way (between Center and Center sts.), Berkeley. 510-[illegible].

[illegible] Market Info: 510-345-7197. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. [illegible] Parking Lot, 5300 [illegible] Ave., Oakland.

Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market Tuesdays, 2-7 p.m. Free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Derby St. (at Martin Luther King Jr. Way), Berkeley.

TRI-VALLEY

Vino 3578 Plaza Way, Lafayette. 925-284-1330. (Italian/Spanish/Tapas) $$

[illegible] & More 11022 Peñas St., Dublin. 925-[illegible]. (American/Steak House) $$-$$$

Los [illegible] 2138 First St., Livermore. 925-449-4454. (Mexican) $

[illegible] Restaurant and [illegible] 750 Clarke [illegible] Way, Danville. 925-314-0974. (California Cuisine) $$

Forbes Mill Steakhouse 200 Sycamore Valley Rd. West, Danville. 925-552-0505. (Steak House) $$$$

[illegible] Original 122 W. Neal St., Pleasanton. 925-[illegible]. (American/Steak House) $$$$

[illegible] Meats 4803 Hopyard Rd., Suite 72, Pleasanton. 925-461-2380. (Barbecue/Deli) $

[illegible] Meats 105 Town & Country Dr., Suite C, Danville. 925-[illegible]. (Barbecue/Deli) $

[illegible] [illegible], Alamo. 925-[illegible]. (Barbecue/Deli) $

The Plaza 600 Moraga Rd., Lafayette. 925-299-0685. (South American/Tapas/Small Plates) $$

Patrick David's 416 Sycamore Valley Rd. W., Danville. 925-838-7611. (Asian Fusion/California Cuisine) $$$$

The [illegible] & the Pear 216 Prospect Ave. (in the Danville Clock Tower Center), Danville. 925-820-8011. (California) $$-$$$

[illegible] 4503 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton. 925-734-0007. (American/Barbecue) $

[illegible] Cafe 4921 [illegible] Blvd., Dublin. 925-828-8380. (American) $

[illegible] 500 Bollinger Canyon Way (in the Crow Canyon Commons Mall), San Ramon. 925-[illegible]. (Italian) $$-$$$

[illegible] 2154 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. 925-819-5558. (Middle Eastern/Persian) $$

[illegible] at the Vineyard 38 [illegible], Livermore. 925-449-9000. (Seafood) $$-$$$

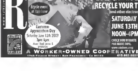
[illegible] 115 Alamo Plaza, Alamo. 925-855-0990. (California Cuisine/Eastern European) $$

Zachary's Chicago Pizza 3110 Crow Canyon Pl., Suite D, San Ramon. 925-244-1222. (Pizza) $-$$

PICK

Pinot Noir Night

Get the latest [illegible] great grapes at a tasting of exclusive pinot noirs at **Vintage Berkeley** (2113 Vine St., Berkeley) on Thursday, June 11. Co-presented by Mrs. Dalloway's, the event will feature wine writer **John Haeger** and winemaker **Hank Skewis** discussing the best of what Haeger calls the "Pacific Pinot Zone," and a beverage that many call the ultimate food wine. 6:30 p.m., free. MrsDalloways.com — *Anneli Rufus*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TRAINS OF THOUGHT

Sam Mendes barely catches his (*Away We Go*). Ridley Scott's gets derailed (*The Taking of Pelham 123*)

By Kelly Vance

John Krasinski and Maya Rudolph make a refreshingly non-glamorous pair in *Away We Go*.

While the rest of us have been sitting around contentedly with 3-D glasses on our faces, Sam Mendes has been quietly redefining the American family drama. Last year's *Revolutionary Road*, for all its [illegible] grin-in-a-gray-flannel-suit deconstruction of 1950s conformism, muddied up the waters considerably with Michael Shannon's supporting portrayal of a tormented, perspicacious outsider. Before that, the UK native Mendes exec-produced *The Kite Runner* and directed the Iraq war film *Jarhead*, but all along he seems to have been aiming his most penetrating investigations — beginning with *American Beauty* and continuing through his producing project *Things We Lost in the Fire* — at the fragile state of the American family.

That investigation takes a left turn into fresh territory in Mendes' *Away We Go*, ostensibly a routine meet-the-folks romantic-comedy road trip, but one that signals us from its very first scene — John Krasinski going down on Maya Rudolph in bed — that it's traveling an alternative route.

Burt (Krasinski) and Verona (Rudolph), a married couple expecting their first child, make a refreshingly non-glamorous pair. They look lived-in, like any couple you'd run into at a farmers' market in a university town, shopping for cilantro. The way Burt and Verona are imagined by San Francisco writer Dave Eggers — who wrote the screenplay with his wife Vendela Vida — we might as well hang a "Mr. and Mrs. Alt America" sign around their necks as they travel around the USA visiting friends and family. In this case, that's a good thing, not a liability. Self-conscious Burt and Verona are trying to research possible hometowns and rediscover their roots, and in so doing we find out something about them. Not everything there is to know — they're fairly complex people — but enough to make the trip meaningful. With the requisite laughs of self-recognition.

First, we meet Burt's parents Jerry (Jeff Daniels) and Gloria (Catherine O'Hara), two Sixties survivors suffering from early-burnout syndrome ("Are we back-ups?"). It's a tribute to Daniels and O'Hara that we don't want to spend one minute longer than necessary with Jerry and Gloria, puffing on the joint of forgetfulness. Next stop, Phoenix, where Verona's former boss Lily (Allison Janney, in fine form) and her nervous mate Lowell (Jim Gaffigan) tussle with their effectless lumpen offspring. Uh-oh. Then it's on to Tucson to see Verona's warm-hearted but harried sister Grace (Carmen Ejogo), contending with kids in a bathtub. The more we see of their families and friends, the more we realize that Verona and Burt are truly on their own in the child-rearing department. Everyone else seems to have made a hash of it.

Away We Go

Directed by Sam Mendes. With John Krasinski, Maya Rudolph, Carmen Ejogo, and Jeff Daniels. Opens Friday

The Taking of Pelham 123

Directed by Tony Scott. With Denzel Washington, John Travolta, John Turturro, and James Gandolfini. Opens Friday

They journey on. In Madison, there's a wince-producing pair of unpleasant New Agey former classmates named LN (née Ellen, played by Maggie Gyllenhaal) and Rod (Josh Hamilton), who regard the gift baby stroller Verona and Burt bring them as if it were coated with anthrax. Then it's on to Montreal for a visit with some disappointed adopters who use pole-dancing as therapy. And Miami — another brother with adjustment issues. It begins to look as if everyone Verona and Burt know is either morose or pretentious, or both. But Vida have a secret weapon all their own, the childlike tale of the barren orange tree with fruit hoped onto it — as heavy-handed a metaphor for the mysteries of the dysfunctional nuclear family as we are likely to encounter.

Let's not hold either Eggers and Vida's laborious similes nor Mendes' often-snide narrative shortcuts against the two lovers, though. *Saturday Night Live* veteran Rudolph and Krasinski (TV's *The Office*) bring an undeniably organic, refreshingly candid appeal (do we dare call it wholesomeness?) to Verona and Burt, which they'll obviously need if they're going to raise a child in a world filled with soothsayers like Mendes and Eggers. *Away We Go* may be Mendes' most coherent critique yet of the vulnerable family module, but it succeeds almost in spite of itself. What we really believe in are Verona and Burt and their Spanish-moss-covered Victorian on the water somewhere in the South, and their orange tree story, come what may.

While we're on the subject of crudes, if you believe that the 1974 actioner *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three* cried out for a remake, we've got some prime Manhattan underground real estate we'd like to show you.

No need to know that the original even existed. *The Taking of Pelham 123* (note the subtitle rewording) actually functions on its own, feebly, as a serviceable 21st-century thriller — terrorists under New York streets, Wall Street panic amidst the chaos, etc. — but veteran directorial eyeball-hurler Tony Scott (*Deja Vu, Top Gun*) messes it up as usual. When a squad of heavily armed guys led by a maniac named Ryder (John Travolta, replacing the original's Robert Shaw) commandeers a subway train and demands $10 million ransom for the frightened passengers, mild-mannered transit official Walter Garber (Denzel Washington in the Walter Matthau role) steps up to match wits with the marauders, as it were. Scott's camera pirouettes, cars crash, and every cast member but the deliberately subdued Washington froths, ostentatiously.

The chief over-actor is Travolta. Neck-tattooed as financial exec Ryder (perfect perp profile), not only nurses a deep grudge against humanity, he has an ulterior motive — to drive up the price of gold and make more than one kind of killing. Where Shaw, in the earlier pic, was a model of polite, compressed menace, trash-mouthed Travolta is a standard psycho killer. The premise is just as faulty as it was in the 1970s — the yeggs get away with the loot by simple trickery, despite the fact that one of the passengers surreptitiously uses a Webcam to broadcast the hostage drama. Ryder, too, can't go anywhere without his laptop.

Soft-spoken Washington is the more interesting of the two. Already under investigation for taking bribes, he's further humiliated by Ryder, but Scott & Co. throw away that subplot in favor of more and bigger explosions. John Turturro and James Gandolfini, as a cop and the mayor respectively, get lost in the shuffle. Too bad. With a little story work (Brian Helgeland wrote the screenplay, from John Godey's novel), Washington, Turturro, and Gandolfini might have been freed up to tell a decent New York corruption story alongside the heist stuff. But then we'd be deprived of Scott's beloved machinery. A man his age (he turns 65 next week) is too old for electric trains. ●

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MOVIES & THEATERS

To learn where a movie is playing, note the abbreviations at the end of each listing, then consult the theater guide at the bottom of this page. Capsule reviews are written by Andrew Gronvall (A.G.), Cole Haddon (C.H.), J.R. Jones (J.J.), and Kelly Vance (K.V.). For a schedule of repertory films, see One-Night Stands at the end of these listings. Please send info fourteen days before event date to editor@eastbayexpress.com

OPENING

Imagine That Eddie Murphy strikes the right balance between silliness and pathos in this screwball family comedy, starring as a divorced, workaholic financial analyst who so neglects his seven-year-old daughter (charmer Yara Shahidi) that she retreats into fantasy. When he discovers that her invisible friends are capable of picking lucrative investments, the daughter [illegible] his tune and begins scheduling playtime alongside biz. Director Karey Kirkpatrick (*Over the Hedge*) [illegible] with a strong supporting cast that includes Martin Sheen as the boss and Thomas Haden Church as an office rival, [illegible] (107 min.) (A.G.) [illegible]

The Song of Sparrows A humble working man [illegible] Karim gets fired from his job at an ostrich farm outside Tehran, and then takes — and keeps on trying — to get something going to support his family. In filmmaker Majid Majidi's delightful slice of ordinary Iranian life, actor Reza Naji [illegible] the everyday side of the Iranian capital. Director/co-writer Majidi specializes in gentle, illuminating parables, [illegible] *The Color of Paradise* and *Children of Heaven*. Recommended (96 min.) (K.V.) $

The Taking of Pelham 123 Not terrifying, but absolutely no improvement on the 1974 original [illegible] Travolta commandeers a New York City subway train [illegible] Denzel Washington [illegible] Tony Scott (*Top Gun*) [illegible] Washington, cop John Turturro, and NYC mayor James Gandolfini take [illegible] [illegible] there was never any hope in the first place. Run-of-the-mill screenplay by Brian Helgeland, adapted from John Godey's novel (106 min.) (K.V.) [illegible]

Showtimes Online

Movie showtimes and online ticket-buying at EastBayExpress.com

ONGOING

Adventureland An '80s nostalgia movie that [illegible] James, a [illegible] (Jesse Eisenberg), takes a summer job at the local amusement park in his hometown of Pittsburgh partly in an effort to remedy his virginity. The plan works. The pic's main [illegible] are its [illegible] true-to-life characters: [illegible] (Martin Starr), a Madonna lookalike (Margarita Levieva), and James' one true love: Em (Kristen Stewart from *Twilight*). Has all the attributes of *American Graffiti*, but run through a John Hughes kaleidoscope. Writer-director Greg Mottola's dialogue

Theater Guide

The guide explains the abbreviations at the end of each capsule. **AL** = Albany **ATE** = Alameda Theatre & Cineplex **BC** = Brenden Concord **BB** = Blackhawk **BP** = [illegible] **BS** = Bay Street **CA** = California **CAPH** = [illegible] **CB** = [illegible] **CUC** = [illegible] **CRPK** = Century Pleasant Hill **CC** = Century Hilltop **CHY** = Century Hayward [illegible] **ORO** = Cerrito [illegible] **DUB** = Dublin [illegible] **EC** = [illegible] **GL** = Grand Lake [illegible] **PH** = Piedmont **RA** = [illegible] **RGE** = [illegible] **UAB** = UA Berkeley **UAED** = UA Emery Bay **V** = Vine **WWS** = West Wind Solano

[illegible]

Angels & Demons Who is killing off the College of Cardinals? Tom Hanks, reprising his role from *The Da Vinci Code* [illegible]

The Brothers Bloom [illegible]

Departures [illegible]

Dinosaurs Alive [illegible]

Drag Me to Hell [illegible]

Easy Virtue Noel Coward's [illegible]

Every Little Step [illegible]

[illegible]

Ghosts of Girlfriends Past [illegible]

[illegible]

The Girlfriend Experience [illegible]

The Hangover [illegible]

The Human Body [illegible]

I Love You, Man [illegible]

Is Anybody There? [illegible]

Land of the Lost [illegible]

Lemon Tree [illegible]

The Living Sea [illegible]

Monsters Vs. Aliens [illegible]

My Life in Ruins [illegible]

Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian [illegible]

Obsessed [illegible]

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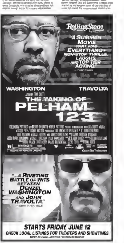
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MOT

[illegible] Laughs while [illegible] dodging the [illegible] [illegible] (105 min.) [illegible]

Race to Witch Mountain [illegible]

[illegible]

Rudo y Cursi [illegible] (103 min.) [illegible]

Sin Nombre [illegible]

The Soloist [illegible] (109 min.) [illegible]

[illegible]

Eddie Murphy in *Imagine That*

[illegible] (126 min.) [illegible]

State of Play [illegible]

(*The Last King of Scotland*) [illegible] (127 min.) [illegible]

Sunshine Cleaning [illegible] (102 min.) [illegible]

Terminator Salvation [illegible] (115 min.) [illegible]

Up [illegible]

X-Men Origins: Wolverine [illegible] (107 min.) [illegible]

ONE-NIGHT STANDS

THURSDAY, JUNE 11

Night and Fog in Japan (107 min., 1960). In the Realm of Oshima (PFA, 7:30)

Jaws (124 min., 1975). Waterfront Flicks (Jack London Square, Oakland, 1:30)

Speaking in Tongues (60 min., 2009). [illegible] (49th St. and Telegraph Ave. [illegible] 8:00)

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

Scandal Sheet (82 min., 1952). Tight Spot: Phil Karlson in the Fifties (PFA, 6:30)

Tight Spot (97 min., 1955). Tight Spot: Phil Karlson in the Fifties (PFA, 8:25)

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

The Catch ([illegible] min., 1961). In the Realm of Oshima (PFA, 6:30)

Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence (123 min., 1983). In the Realm of Oshima (PFA, 8:30)

Pee-wee's Big Adventure (90 min., 1985). Family Film Series (RCE, noon)

SUNDAY, JUNE 14

[illegible] (141 min., 2003). [illegible] (PFA, 2:00)

Pee-wee's Big Adventure (90 min., 1985). Family Film Series (RCE, noon)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

The English Surgeon (82 min., 2008). [illegible] (PFA, 7:00)

Flow: For Love of Water (93 min., 2008). Preceded by social hour and [illegible] potluck dinner [illegible] Hall, [illegible] 7:30)

LANDMARK THEATRES

ALBANY 1115 Solano Ave., at San Pablo, Albany

EAST VIRTUE (PG-13)

SUMMER HOURS (NR)

CALIFORNIA 2113 Kittredge near Shattuck, Berkeley

STAR TREK (PG-13)

THE BROTHERS BLOOM (PG-13)

ANGELS & DEMONS (PG-13)

PIEDMONT 4186 Piedmont at 41st, Oakland

EASY VIRTUE (PG-13)

SUMMER HOURS (NR)

THE BROTHERS BLOOM (PG-13)

SHATTUCK 2230 Shattuck at Kittredge, Berkeley

Screening Lounge

THE GIRLFRIEND EXPERIENCE (R)

Screening Lounge

TERMINATOR SALVATION (PG-13)

UP (PG)

IMAGINE THAT (PG)

THE WINDS OF SPARROWS (PG)

REVANCHE (NR)

DEPARTURES (PG-13)

SUNSHINE CLEANING (R)

RUDO Y CURSI (R)

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MUSIC

NETTA BE GOOD

Berkeley R&B star boosts her career by running with rappers

By Rachel Swan

PK knows a hit when he sees one. A former business major at the University of Southern California, the lanky 28-year-old parlayed his degree into the rap game, managing famed San Jose producer Traxamillion, self-proclaimed "mixtape kings" the Demolition Men, and most notably, a popular East Bay rapper named the Jacka — whose name derives from his talent for robbing and burglarizing. Over the years, PK's company, Golden Mean Management & Music LLC, has become a staple in the East Bay hip-hop scene, known for working with hardcore-but-commercially-viable turf artists. Only recently did PK set his sights on a genre he never thought he'd touch: tender, feminine R&B.

Specifically, he found a young woman named Netta Brielle, whose pink nail polish and girlish giggle belied her grit and hustle. Brielle, who goes by the alias Netta B, was studying musical theater at San Jose State University at the time she first encountered PK. Both were recording music at 17 Hertz Studio in Hayward. Netta came during the hours that she wasn't in class or working one of several part-time jobs. She used her financial aid money to bankroll a mixtape.

"We were open to doing something else but we weren't even really bringing in other artists," PK said. Nonetheless, he was charmed by Netta B and thought he saw real commercial potential in her music. After all, R&B all but took over "urban music" in the past few years, with hooky ballads supplanting rap songs on most hip-hop radio stations. Even harder street-oriented rappers like the Jacka tend to sing rather than speak their lyrics. Given the genre's popularity and the apparent dearth of celebrity R&B artists in the East Bay, PK thought Netta would be an easy sale. "Actually," he said in retrospect, "I was absolutely wrong."

Indeed, they make a bit of an odd couple. Pretty, hard like Netta oscillates between two poles: Sometimes she's sweet and well mannered, other times she's fresh and tarty. The singer grew up on Ward Street in Berkeley — the middle child in a family of female exhibitionists. Her older sister was an aspiring singer who later switched to accounting; her younger sister was a rebel who wound up getting shot on the Berkeley/North Oakland border. Netta's mother was a doting single parent who ensured that her daughters got a well-rounded fine-arts training during their formative years.

Thus, Netta started developing her résumé at a pretty young age. As a young girl she played Zonia Loomis in an early Berkeley Rep production of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* and cameoed in movies like *Mrs. Doubtfire*. At age six, she danced onstage with MC Hammer at the Oakland Coliseum. (Hammer and Netta's mother got their hair done at the same Oakland salon.) In fourth grade she learned to play flute and joined the school band. In sixth grade she met and rapped for Tupac Shakur in a San Leandro Hotel (an event significant enough that Netta still highlights it in her CV). In high school she earned a full scholarship to American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, and kept advancing her theater career while singing and dancing at school talent shows.

Netta B

[illegible]

She was, in other words, a surprising addition to the Golden Mean brand. But PK had no trouble putting together the cottage industry that became Netta B. The singer came with her own loose coterie of makeup artists, fashion designers, dance choreographers, and another manager named Kp, who were all eager to help her create an image: "Kind of Vanity 6 meets 2009," she said. Netta B wears frilly tutus and corsets, and keeps her hair in an asymmetrical side cut. She teeters around on pointy stiletto heels. Her songs incorporate crunchy new-wave beats and woolly synthesizers, allowing chords to accrete along an unwavering tonal center. They fall in line with the hard, metallic form of hip-hop that's come to characterize the work of Timbaland, Kanye West, and even Snoop Dogg — all of whom appear to be listening to a lot of dub step and electronica. Netta B's version is a little less inspired than that of her predecessors. What makes it interesting is that she's paired the heavy dance beats with such high, fragile female vocals — the kind that might shatter if placed too close to a snare and high hat.

For all her arts training and racy apparel, Netta B had a pretty hard life, and apparently it softened her. She grew up in a single-parent home without a lot of money. During college she worked up to 35 hours a week, drove to San Jose State every morning from her South Berkeley home, and recorded music at night. She skimped on sleep. In 2007 her younger sister Kikhuehe Brooks was killed in a drive-by shooting on 59th Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Way. "We put an obituary together and a CD together in the same night," said Netta. For a while, Netta had a promising acquaintanceship with Def Jam executive Shakir Stewart after winning "The Def Jam Mega Star Search" competition in April 2008. Then Stewart committed suicide. By the time Netta B got on board with Golden Mean, she was searching not only for resources, but for stability.

But Netta is nothing if not unflappable. The single for her new *Electric Rebel Sounds* EP comes with a video that shows exactly how the singer is positioning herself within the combative world of hip-hop. Called "Dirty Boyz," it has the singer rapping in a whispery, creme-lather voice about the type of guys who turn her on — "hood nerds" with skateboards and aerosol spray cans. A departure from the bouncy new-wave sound that characterizes most of her material, "Dirty Boyz" is buoyed by a minimalist industrial beat courtesy of Traxamillion — a serial brander who gives himself a shout-out on the track (and on every track he produces). In the video Netta wears short shorts, a glittery halter top, and sneakers. She sidles up to a line of tattooed skater guys — among them rapper Erk the Jerk, who produces a lot of Netta's music and is also part of the Golden Mean cabal. *I like dirty boyz and dirty boyz like me*, Netta purrs on the hook. She goes on for four minutes about her weakness for questionable low-class men, despite protestations from her family and friends who think she might get burned. It's an ode to the female libido and a bit of a put-on.

"Dirty Boyz" is an anomalous presence on an LP that's mostly up-tempo dance songs and ballads. But it's indicative of the Netta B brand identity that PK has worked to create. Here, she's robust and carefully packaged, made more powerful by her association with popular local rap acts. In fact, Netta B makes the perfect female counterpart to her rapper brethren. "Dirty Boyz" is a very aggressive song, and no obvious stab at real commercial success. It might actually work. ●

Rachel.Swan@EastBayExpress.com

Show Details

Netta B performs Saturday, June 13 at Berkeley's Juneteenth Fest (Adeline St. between Ashby & Alcatraz Aves.), 2:55 p.m. Free. MySpace.com/NettaBMusic

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SUN 6/14 3:00 pm $8 adults/$4 kids — "SILLY SUNDAYS" KIDS' SHOW — COLIBRI A journey through Latin America with traditional songs & instruments
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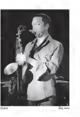
SKERIK'S DISTILLATION OF PUNK

An unscripted jazzbo moment.

By Dave Cantor



Skerik

Being enamored with countless genres, Skerik allows any band, player, or artist to influence the way he approaches his sax. From moment to moment during a performance, the Northwest native has the capacity to launch into a maelstrom of notes that, while maintaining a tangential relationship to whatever melody his band is in the midst of, has an aggressive tone unmatched by the players around him. Credit that to his affinity for punk notables such as Minutemen bassist Mike Watt.

"Mike Watt's just a big inspiration to us," he said over the phone from New Orleans. "You can learn so much from these guys — Bad Brains, Fugazi, Minutemen. I was really into a band like the Dead Kennedys, because I just loved the rawness of the music and its political stance — just saying shit in such a blunt way."

That might sound like an odd way for a saxophonist to speak about musical influences, but Skerik, who stops by Berkeley's Starry Plough on Friday, June 12, has been as influenced by punk as much as anything else. From the blasting free-jazz of his self-released work on 2001's *Psychofrenatic* and 2006's *Left for Dead in Seattle* to his whimsical additions to Les Claypool's band or Ol' Whalez and Woe a few years ago, Skerik has incorporated electronic manipulations of his instrument in ways that most other jazzbos would find disconcerting. It's not a rote definition of punk that Skerik subscribes to, but a genuine perception that anything is possible. The musical aesthetics that seem to fly from Skerik's sax are ample proof of that.

Skerik's appreciation of punk also extends to the way he handles the business end of his career. Through a series of thorough web sites devoted to his disparate musical endeavors, the saxophonist is able to meet the new media's needs while traversing small clubs and swank venues across the nation and in Europe, where he's briefly touring before returning to the West Coast to gig. The approach that more and more players are adopting, though, has as much to do with the DIY spirit of punk's past as good business sense.

But it's his appreciation for any interesting aural experiment that has kept Skerik from being a household name. His devotion to all music is readily displayed in each group that he performs with. From his funky workouts with Charlie Hunter as a member of Garage a Trois to the more muscular playing in Crack Sabbath — a metal-tinged trio — Skerik has distanced himself from the pool of traditional players, saying that he realized "everyone involved in it was just a huge nerd," and that at some point it all turned into "a jazz arms race."

On the first few albums that Skerik recorded — Sadhappy's *Depth Charge* (1992) and *Guest* (1994) with Critters Buggin — each ensemble passes some combination of electronic music, hip-hop, jazz, and rock. The indefinable sounds worked to disallow music industry hunches from categorizing those efforts.

"We were around in the early Nineties, so that was the big Seattle feeding frenzy. Nirvana and Soundgarden had come out," he recalled. But in that sea of sludgy, hard-rock fetishists, Sadhappy was a completely instrumental group that moved between jazz inklings and thrashy, punk-informed rock. While ensembles without vocalists rarely achieve major radio play or face time on MTV, this moment in Seattle's music history allowed anyone with even a modicum of talent to be a potential star. Although offered a deal by Interscope Records and settling on some specifics after flying to New York for a meeting, Sadhappy and a disenfranchised Skerik "never heard from 'em again" upon returning to Seattle.

Subsequent to the major-label penetration of Seattle's music scene, Skerik spent time in London during the mid 1990s, playing with various ensembles that broadened and added an air of sophistication to his playing. And while even the 2006 recording *Husky* with his Syncopated Taint Septet traffics in outbursts of spontaneity, there are now as many grooves as anything else. Skerik hasn't disregarded difficult music, he's just now begun to temper that confusing amalgam of sounds with more standard funk and soul jazz backdrops that seem as primed for dancing as for listening.

For his two Bay Area shows, Skerik will be joined by drummer Scott Amendola, organist Wil Blades, and guitarist Will Bernard, who are familiar with each other from a variety of shared recording and touring dates. This collection of players, while sporting no official banner under which to perform, exhibit what jazz — or any creative music — is supposed to be. The few sets each night that the ensemble will perform won't be void of form, but can be guaranteed to include at least a few unscripted moments. ■

Show Details
Skerik plays with Scott Amendola, Wil Blades, and Will Bernard at the Starry Plough (3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley) on Friday, June 12. 9 p.m., $10. CrittersBuggin.com

Feedback@EastBayExpress.com

21ST CENTURY PASSION

Classic rock opera, African drumming icon, and the rare jazz piano duet.

Green Day

21st Century Breakdown

If anyone had suggested, circa *Dookie* fifteen years ago, that Green Day would one day carry the torch for the classic rock opera — well, no one would have. But now the band who sang, on that album, *Do you have the time to listen to me whine about nothing and everything all at once?* have plenty to say — about everything.

21st Century Breakdown not only picks up where the mega-selling *American Idiot* left off. It upped the ante with one broad-stroke proclamation after the next. In other words, a full-blown Statement. Populated with catch phrases (*I don't want to live in the modern world, desperate but not helpless*), the narrative tracks two well-intentioned but beaten-down souls, Christian and Gloria, who are bitterly adrift in the post-Bush malaise that a naive, easily manipulated America brought upon itself.

Every track is an anthem, but Billie Joe Armstrong, Mike Dirnt, and Tré Cool, periodically augmented by pianist Jason Freese and produced by Butch Vig, steer clear of excess and cliché as they navigate their tale, which is divided into three acts. It could have easily gone any of several wrong ways, but Green Day's punk has long since been tempered with pop's most attractive attributes, and *21st Century Breakdown*, like its predecessor, is melodically accessible and relentlessly exhilarating. Classic-rock references abound, and that's no doubt deliberate: in a musical climate so driven by disposability, Green Day still believe in making records that define their era. And they've made another one. (Reprise)

—*Jeff Tamarkin*

Olatunji

Drums of Passion: Legacy Edition

The concept of "world music" is a relatively recent phenomenon. Before the 1970s, long before cross-cultural fusions became somewhat commonplace, albums of music from other countries and cultures were filed under "ethnic music" in the select record stores that carried more than Top 40 offerings. One of the albums that set these changes in motion was *Drums of Passion* by Nigerian-born, then NYC-based Olatunji. Originally released in 1960, *Drums* was the first album of traditional West African percussion-and-chant music recorded in the United States (for a major label, no less). With this album to herald his music, Olatunji went on to influence and befriend such iconic types as Carlos Santana, the Dead's Mickey Hart, John Coltrane, and Joan Baez.

Almost all the sounds on *Drums of Passion* were brought forth by a quartet of percussionists and nine (mostly female) singers. The rhythmic patterns here are mesmerizing — minimalist composer Steve Reich was in fact partially inspired by West African drumming — but with dimensions of urgency and physicality. You need not be hep to traditional African dancing to get swept up by the interlocking cadences of the title track (which Santana adapted into one or more of his songs) and the spare, shimmering "Oyin Momo Ado." Be amazed by the riotous "Menu Dudu" (one of eight bonus tracks, many with horns), which presages the Afrobeat of Fela Kuti and Hugh Masekela. Also included is a bonus disc, a "sequel" of sorts, *More Drums of Passion* (1966), Olatunji's last for the Columbia label. It's a fine pairing, as *More* is conceptually similar to its forerunner but features a wider palette (more percussionists) and lush, denser production (dig the judicious but quasi-psychedelic echo applied to "Bethlehemu" and "Mbiru").

If you're a percussion devotee or seriously or casually interested in African roots sounds, put this package on your short list. Seriously. (Columbia/Legacy)

—*Mark Keresman*

Satoko Fujii & Myra Melford

Under the Water

Berkeley's Maybeck Hall has hosted many of jazz's greatest pianists in live solo recitals. *Under the Water*, recorded there in September 2007, documents that rare creature: the piano duet.

From Japan, Satoko Fujii studied with the great Paul Bley, has recorded in an assortment of contexts, from duo to big band with American and Japanese musicians, and she visits the United States often. Myra Melford is from the Chicago area, has been a fixture on New York's jazz scene since the mid-1980s, and now teaches at the University of California at Berkeley. Both are among the most exciting cutting-edge jazz keyboard-crackers walking the Earth.

Under the Water presents three duets and a solo piece from each. Stylistically, Fujii is more percussive and economical, while Melford is impressionistic and draws on shades of blues and Indian music. (She spent about a year studying in India.) The album begins with "Yadokari," with both using extended techniques (such as playing or altering the innards of their pianos) for some crackling, folk-like explorations, then engaging in some wry, darting interaction on the keys. "The Magnificent Fish" begins as a meditation, evolves into Chopin-like lyricism, and then into feverish, spiky McCoy Tyner-esque runs.

Water is demanding music, but for those valuing subtle and spontaneous interaction, it holds many rewards. (Libra)

—*Mark Keresman*

LOCAL LICKS

Patrick Cress' Telepathy

Alive and Testing

A rare strain of wild free jazz given to bobbing heads and tapping toes — not to mention shapely songcraft. Many bass melodies seem culled from rock and funk, but the horns are pure jazz. Led by Cress (saxophones) and colored by Aaron Novik's bass clarinet (on a par to use on an all-clarinet metal album), Telepathy's songs blur the line between comfortable and challenging. (Telepathic Music)

At the Red Poppy Art House (2698 Folsom St., San Francisco) on June 13, 8 p.m., $10

Sparky Grinstead

Winter Comes and Goes

Recorded in producer Eric Kampman's living room, this is a decidedly do-it-yourself release. Grinstead, aka Norman Famous, began home recording back in the late 1970s, issued a trio of full-lengths, then stopped — making *Winter Comes and Goes* his first in 26 years. As a collection of modest, introspective folk-pop tunes, it works just fine. (Sparlene Records)

Neiro

Sound of My Blood EP

Led by electric guitarist Tomoki Splisbury, North Bay contemporary jazz trio Neiro features Kit Walker on Hammond B-3 and Paul van Wageningen on drums. Though not always front and center, Splisbury's electric guitar is the spindle around which his compositions turn, characterized by circular phrasing and bold excursions that echo traditional Japanese melodies. (self-released)

Blisses B

You Should

This San Francisco act recommends itself to fans of Wilco, the state of South Carolina, and even dogs and gummy worms. Regardless of whether lovers of the latter confections will take to Blisses B's sound, the band can't be far off. *You Should* is full of jubilant funk and folk festival fare that never bogs down in jam band excess. Reluctant hippies take note. (self-released)

At the Poleng Lounge (1751 Fulton St., San Francisco) on June 17, 10 p.m., $5

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CONCERTS & CLUBS

THURSDAY 11

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Country Joe & [illegible] Open Mic w/ special guests, Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, 7-8 pm, $6-$10
Echo Falls w/ the Nasty Chalis, the Muffin Tops, Starry Plough, 9 pm, $7
Missy [illegible] & the New Hip Freight & Salvage, 8 pm, $18.50-$19.50

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

The Dukes Pedro Santos Point, 6:30-8 pm, free
The Brothers [illegible] Armando's, 8 pm, $8
[illegible] Quartet Anna's Jazz Island, 8 pm, $10
[illegible] Cafe Van Kleef, 8 pm, $5
[illegible] swing jazz, King Yen Chinese Restaurant, 6:30-8 pm, free
Mind of Mac at 88 featuring Jimmy Cobb's Six Fifteen Band, Yoshi's, 8 & 10 pm, $30
Le Jazz Hot vintage gypsy jazz, Spenger's, 8:30 pm, free
[illegible] jazz, Le Bon ... Cafe, 7 pm, free
Mojo Rock Beckett's, 10 pm, free
[illegible] dinner jazz w/ guest cabaret singers, The Alley, 8 pm, free
Skip Henderson [illegible] Quinn's Lighthouse, 8 pm, free
Thursday Night Live rotating live bands, Jax's Trattoria, 6-10 pm, free

Rock & Pop

Jim Harley [illegible], Armando's, 6-9 pm, free
The Gompers [illegible] Sports Bar, 10 pm, free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Mato Aria Mountain Winery, 7:30 pm, $45-$75
"Thursdays Live" live music every week, [illegible] Nightclub, 9 pm, $6-$12
Unplugged live R&B, soul, & jazz [illegible] after 11 p.m., Club Anton, 8 pm, $10-$20

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Salsa Night [illegible] plus dance lessons, [illegible] Bar & Grill, 8 pm, $10

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

John Hancock Brown & Music, 8-11:30 pm, $15
King's Night all-star blues jam, [illegible], 8 & 11:30 pm, free
Rock Wings w/ Michael Musika, honky-tonk, Cafe du Nord, 8 pm, $12

Classical & Opera

San Francisco Symphony w/ Gil Shaham, violin, Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor & San Francisco Chorus, performing Berg's Violin Concerto & Schubert's Mass No. 6, Davies Symphony Hall, 2 pm, $30-$130

Experimental & Avant-Garde

The [illegible] John-Henderson Book Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 pm, $15
[illegible] w/ Midnight, Amphibious Costume, & [illegible], Luggage Store Gallery, 8 pm, $6-$10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Beach Blanket Babylon musical revue that spoofs pop-culture figures in which Snow White travels around the world in search of Prince Charming, Club Fugazi, 8 pm, $25-$77
The Brooklyn [illegible] SF Presents: Ryan Leslie Yoshi's San Francisco, 10 pm, $20
The Charles Unger [illegible] Bar 888, 6-10 pm, free
Skinny Jones San Francisco-based duo performs live jazz and blues, Top of the Mark, 7:30-11:30 pm, $10
Uptown Jazz Rock The Music Space, 9 pm, free

Rock & Pop

The Constantines w/ Crystal [illegible], Rickshaw Stop, 7:30 pm, $14
[illegible] Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 pm, free
Forever w/ Zen, Songs for Moms, Hemlock Tavern, 9 pm, $8
[illegible] w/ Poison Control, [illegible], Annie's Social Club, 8 pm, $8
East Is All w/ Still Flyin', [illegible], Bottom of the Hill, 9 pm, $12-$14
Rock 'n' Roll with [illegible] Johnny Foley's Irish House, 8:30 pm, free

Funk Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

DJ [illegible] w/ [illegible], DJ Tap 10 and the Honor Bob & the [illegible] Ensemble, Ruby Skye, 9 pm, $20
[illegible] w/ DJ [illegible], The Independent, 8 pm, $20

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

[illegible] w/ guest Latin dance band plus DJs [illegible], 9 pm, $7
[illegible] Live live dance, Brazilian dance music [illegible] hip-hop, 9 pm, $8
[illegible] 8:30 pm, free
Flamenco Thursdays Carola Zertuche presents music & dance w/ traditional flamenco performers, Peña Pachamama, 8:30 pm, $20
Pasaafro Red Devil Lounge, 8 pm, $8-$10

More Listings Online
Get info about hundreds of musical events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

FRIDAY 12

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

The [illegible] Blues Armando's, 8 pm, $17
[illegible] the Phoebes Cafe Van Kleef, 8 pm, $5
[illegible] w/ [illegible] Cafe, 7:30-9:30 pm, free
[illegible] Spenger's, 8:30 pm, free
Leslie Lewis & Kathy Kallick w/ Tom Rozum, Patrick Sauber & [illegible], Freight & Salvage, 8 pm, $18.50-$19.50
[illegible] Music [illegible] Yolo, 7 pm, free

Classical & Opera

[illegible] piano duo, plus [illegible] Hall, Presbyterian Church, 8 pm, $25, seniors $20, children $10
"The Catholic Mass From the [illegible] Ages Through the Early Baroque" featuring the [illegible] Singers of the [illegible] Collegium Musicum, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 8 pm, free

Experimental & Avant-Garde

[illegible] w/ Scott Amendola, Wil Blades, & Will Bernard, Starry Plough, 9 pm, $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Bay Area [illegible] Big Book [illegible] Club, 8 pm, $10-$15
Denise Perrier & Swing Fever Anna's Jazz Island, 8 pm, $17
Mind of Mac at 88 [illegible] Jimmy Cobb's Six Fifteen Band, Yoshi's, 8 & 10 pm, $30
[illegible] dinner jazz w/ guest [illegible], The Alley, 8 pm, free

Rock & Pop

The Coverts [illegible] Wayside Park, 7-8:30 pm, free
[illegible] Rock Bike Bar one-year anniversary w/ [illegible], Burlesque & [illegible] Collective, Rock Club, 9 pm, $5
[illegible] w/ the Rock [illegible], Ashkenaz, 9 pm, $10
The Real [illegible] w/ Pine & Battery, [illegible], 9 pm, $8
Rhythm Method Beckett's, 10 pm, free
Saint [illegible] w/ Cold Grave, Sons of [illegible], & the Vinyl Vines, [illegible] on Telegraph, 8 pm, $10
Unholy [illegible] w/ [illegible], 924 Gilman, 8 pm, $6

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

East Bay Soul & Funk [illegible] [illegible], 9 pm, students $5
[illegible] 33 Productions [illegible] Shop & Cafe, 7:30 pm, free

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Harmony Festival featuring [illegible] Franti & Spearhead, [illegible], Cake, [illegible] Kennedys, Bad Brains, Pepper, Rebelution, Shpongle, ALO, [illegible] All Stars, [illegible] Crazy Engine w/ Melvin Seals, & [illegible], Sonoma County Fairgrounds, 3 pm, $30-$45, students [illegible]
[illegible] live flamenco guitar & [illegible], 7:30 pm, free
[illegible] w/ [illegible], Point Richmond Music, 5:30 pm, free

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] w/ Steve Taylor [illegible], 9 pm, $8
Lonny Smith & [illegible] Skillet Lickers [illegible], 8 & 10 pm, $20

Classical & Opera

San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra [illegible] First Presbyterian Church, 8 pm, donation
San Francisco Symphony w/ Gil Shaham, violin, Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor, & San Francisco Chorus, performing Berg's Violin Concerto & Schubert's Mass No. 6, Davies Symphony Hall, 8 pm, $30-$130

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Transmigration of [illegible] Spacemen [illegible], the Pink Snow [illegible], & Hollow Creed, The Knockout, 8 pm, $5

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Beach Blanket Babylon musical revue that spoofs pop-culture figures in which Snow White travels around the world in search of Prince Charming, Club Fugazi, 8 pm, $25-$77
[illegible] Gonzalo Rubalcaba [illegible] Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 & 10 pm, $[illegible], kids matinee $5
The John Jorgenson [illegible] Great American Music Hall, 8 pm, $22-$24

Rock & Pop

The Coverts w/ Adam Franklin & the Bolts of Melody, [illegible], 9 pm, [illegible]
[illegible] w/ Woodlands, [illegible], The Independent, 8 pm, $15
Fast [illegible] '80s covers, Maggie McGarry's, 9 pm, free
[illegible] w/ [illegible], Great Northern, Bimbo's 365 Club, 9 pm, $25
[illegible] w/ Knights of [illegible], Red Devil Lounge, 9 pm, $12
[illegible] Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 pm, free
[illegible] w/ [illegible], The Fillmore, 8 pm, $38.50

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PICKS

A Camp

Even though most people will remember the Cardigans and its slinky singer Nina Persson for the frothy mid-1990s smash "Lovefool," the Swedish outfit turned out well into the new millennium. **A Camp** is Persson's solo project that got its start back in 2001 with a country-flavored debut produced by Sparklehorse's Mark Linkous and featured contributions by Persson's now-husband Nathan Larson of Shudder to Think. While that project slipped under the radar, the band's sophomore bow *Colonia* finds Persson, Larson and Linkous regrouping behind songs that reverberate with girl-group harmonies and baroque horn arrangements while sardonic allusions are made between American colonialism and love. Max Martin it ain't. A Camp will be showcasing the dark side of Swedish pop at **the Independent** (628 Divisadero St., San Francisco) on Sunday, June 14. 8 p.m., $17. TheIndependentSF.com — *Dave Gil de Rubio*

Jimmy Cobb's So What Band

On the eve of its fiftieth anniversary, Miles Davis' 1959 album *Kind of Blue* has as much staying power as it ever did. Recorded in just two sessions, the five tunes are crisp, beautiful, and accessible: two ballads, two twelve-bar blues songs, and that funky "So What" track with its immortal bass and piano intro. It's required listening for any musician, and a staple in many people's CD collections (even if it's the only jazz record there). All but one of the original *Kind of Blue* personnel are deceased. The sole survivor, drummer **Jimmy Cobb**, just celebrated his eightieth birthday with a [illegible] concert at Yoshi's San Francisco. He'll mark the album's half-centennial June 10 through 14 at **Yoshi's Oakland** branch (510 Embarcadero W.), with a six-piece band that features Cobb on drums, Larry Willis on piano, Buster Williams on bass, trumpeter Wallace Roney, Javon Jackson on tenor, and Vincent Herring on alto. 8 & 10 p.m., $30. Yoshis.com — *Rachel Swan*

Lavay Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers

Lavay Smith is one of the country's best jazz singers, and why she isn't better known remains a mystery. Her multi-generational band can play anything from New Orleans R&B to the most sophisticated swing-band charts, with side trips to Cuban and New Orleans grooves, but it's Smith's voice that's the showstopper: a sultry contralto that's as smooth as silk and as sharp as a tack. With a deep repertoire that includes classics from the American songbook as well as original tunes that can compare favorably to any blast from the past, Smith and her band remain one of the jewels of the local nightclub scene. Lavay Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers serve up their sizzling sounds at **Biscuits & Blues** (401 Mason St., San Francisco) on Friday, June 12. 8 p.m., $20. BiscuitsandBlues.com — *j. poet*

A Camp.

Burke Schuchmann and Brian Ganz

The [illegible] Chamber Music Foundation presents the cello-piano duo of **Burke Schuchmann** and **Brian Ganz**, with special guest flutist **Yoel Ronen** in performances of Martinu's Flute Trio, Brahms' Sonata in E minor for cello and piano, and Chopin's Scherzo in C# minor for solo piano and Sonata in G minor for cello and piano. Schuchmann has served as principal cellist with the Salzburger Solisten in Austria, the Sacramento Symphony, and the Mendocino Festival Orchestra, while Ganz has won major prizes in the Marguerite Long Jacques Thibaud International Piano Competition and Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Piano Competition. At **First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley** (2407 Dana St., Berkeley) on Friday, June 12. 8 p.m., $18-$25. Palomarin.org or 510-234-4502 — *Jason Victor Serinus*

C&C

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Danza Nights Buena Vista-style Latin dancing w/ [illegible] Salsa, & [illegible], Peña Pachamama, 8:30 pm, $13.50

SATURDAY 13

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] [illegible] Sharps, 8 pm, free
Elliot Randall w/ Cyndi Harvell, special guest, Tracy Hough, 9 pm, $8
Freight 41st Anniversary Celebration w/ [illegible], Freight & Salvage, 8 pm, $15.50-$30.50
[illegible] w/ [illegible] Cafe, 7:30-9:30 pm, free
[illegible] Cafe Van Kleef, 6 pm, $5
Silver Spur [illegible], 7:15-9 pm, free
Sugar [illegible] acoustic [illegible], Cafe [illegible], 2-4 pm, free
The [illegible] Trio featuring [illegible], [illegible], 8:30 pm, free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Christian McBride & Inside Straight Yoshi's, 8 & 10 pm, $18-$22 [illegible] Thomas [illegible]
[illegible] Jazzschool, 8 pm, $15
[illegible] [illegible], 8 pm, free
The Jazz Fourtet Caffe [illegible], 7:30 pm, free
[illegible]: the [illegible] Thomas Trio Sharps, 10 pm, free
Mal Sharpe's Big Money in Jazz [illegible] Jazz [illegible], 8 pm, $16
[illegible] Jazzschool, 5 pm, $12
[illegible] classic jazz w/ guest [illegible] singers, The Alley, 6 pm, free
[illegible] Jazz Trio [illegible] Pub, 9:30 pm, $3

Rock & Pop

[illegible] w/ [illegible], [illegible] Operahouse, 8 pm, $12
The Dolly Rots w/ the Leftovers, Dynamite B, Stork Club, 9 pm, $8
An Evening w/ [illegible] [illegible], 9:30 pm, free
The Great American Food and Music Fest featuring Little Feat, Shoreline Amphitheater, noon, $35
[illegible] w/ [illegible], Switchblade Riot, Uptown, 8 pm, $12
[illegible] w/ [illegible] Machete, Small Change, [illegible], on Telegraph, 8 pm, $10
Last Call [illegible] Bar & Grill, 9:30 pm, free
Los Amiguitos de La Peña Saturday morning children's show w/ live music, La Peña Cultural Center, 10:30 am, $5, kids $4
Fabulosa w/ the [illegible] Band, the Art [illegible] Band, The [illegible], 8 pm, free
Sharps [illegible] Restaurant, 6:30-9:30 pm, free
[illegible] w/ [illegible], [illegible], [illegible], $24 Gilman, 7 pm, $8

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] Folk Entertainment [illegible]
Carnival, 8 pm, free
[illegible] CD Release w/ [illegible], Mr. Ms., [illegible], & more, [illegible], 8 pm, $10

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Cuban Son w/ Cubanacan's "Ron Pace Project", [illegible] Cafe, 2:30 pm, free
Harmony Festival featuring Michael Franti & Spearhead, [illegible], Brad Kennedy, [illegible], Pepper, Rebelution, Shpongle, ALO, Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars, Steve Kimock Crazy Engine w/ Melvin Seals, & more, Sonoma County Fairgrounds, noon, $30-$40, weekend pass $119-$500
[illegible] Ashkenaz, 9 pm, $8
[illegible] Night w/ [illegible] live bands, [illegible], 10 pm, free
[illegible] Ashkenaz, 9:30 pm, $11-$13

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Commander Cody Biscuits & Blues, 6 & 10 pm, $25
[illegible]: A Benefit for [illegible] Fest w/ [illegible] Eden, Out on a Clef, [illegible], & [illegible] and the Curious [illegible], 3-8 pm, $8-$20
[illegible] Night Cafe International, 7 pm, free
The Irving M. Klein International String Competition [illegible], 10 am-3 pm, $5-$20
[illegible] Italian folk music w/ [illegible], Caffe Trieste, 10:30 am-12 pm, free
San Francisco Free Folk Festival w/ Laurie Lewis & Tom Rozum & Friends, [illegible]

Connection, Forcefunds: the East Brothers, Azi, Kapplesho, the Irvingtons, the Palm Wine Boys, Tobiasz Rusnall, Whisper Rendered Whisper All Special, Faith Plate & more. Whitman Dance School, 12:10 pm, free

Classical & Opera

San Francisco Renaissance Voices: The Tenebrae & the Dance Seventh Avenue Performances, 7:30 pm, $18, students/seniors $15

San Francisco Symphony w/ Gil Shaham, violin, Michael Tilson Thomas conductor & San Francisco Chorus performing Berg's Violin Concerto & Schubert's Mass No. 6. Davies Symphony Hall. 8 pm. 838-9330

Gospel & Vocal

San Francisco ChamberArtists Presents "Re-Cycle, Garland Sing Along" recycled and re-purposed tunes and text. St. Mark's Lutheran Church. 5 pm, 632-008.

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Devine Bordeaux Babylon Musical revue and spoof of pop culture figures in which Snow White travels through the realm in search of Prince Charming. Club Fugazi, 7 & 10 pm, $25-$57

The Tannen Ginger Experience Bar 888, 6-10 pm, free

Shrine Lounge Cabaret, Autobahn, & Los Spedi Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 & 10 pm,

$18-$30, kids' matinee $5

Rooted East Telegraph Lounge 9-11 pm, free

Vallerra Gross: Telepathy Red Poppy Art House, 9 pm, $10-$15

Alameda Orchestra Vertical Burns Center for the Arts Forum & 2:30 pm, free

Oakland Wolf Trio Rooted Café Illimone 2 pm, $25

Bernie: Tenebre & the Little Bighorn Aura Rivers, 10:30 pm, free

More Listings Online

Get info about hundreds of musical events at **EastBayExpress.com** or **m.EastBayExpress.com**

Rock & Pop

Autoholy w/ Off Campus, the Audiophiles, Autumn of the Hill, 10 pm, $10

An Brook Illimone w/ Autumn Findlay, Bowes Bones & $15 Cams 5 pm, $18

The Black Pages Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 pm, free

The Avenues Cafe du Nord, 8 pm, $12

Sunset Slimmerhouse Night featuring Owners of the Fall Thread, Autumn Earthflower & Self-Immersive, G3 Lounge, 8 pm, $10

Aura & Roll Happy Aura Session w/ Janel Dawson Thai Parfadle, 3-8 pm, free

Harry Up Whisper w/ Sister Candy Bootsing Sons, Haunted Event 5 pm, $7

Birdelly w/ Slams, Ell, & Tomboys, Annie's Social Club, 9 pm, $8

Joy Rooted w/ Then On Sea, Earthman & Strangers, The Independents, 9 pm, $15

Angel Horse & the Goldenhearts w/ Billy Schafer, the Avion, Hotel Utah, 8 pm, $8

Tragically Hip The Whisper, 9 pm, $70.50

Wayward Bones w/ Cosmo Antenna & the Rooted Spirits, Bottom of the Hill, 3 pm, free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Trendset, w/ Spade Hester, Big Brooklyn Red, Cafe du Nord, 9:30 pm, $10-$12

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Rupal w/ al Colectiva, Bayou Belle & dj Bata, Silva, 9 pm, $15

SUNDAY 14

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Power and Unplugged the Mongrels, Adrenaline & Mid-Amer w/ rotating artists, Jupiter, 5 pm, free

Pat Rooted & Home Room C'est Sho Fella, 8:30 pm, free

Saffire the Uppity Blues Women Freight & Salvage, 8 pm, $18.50-$19.50

Paramount Irish Room with Story Room Starry Plough, 8 pm, sliding scale

Classical & Opera

Trombone Metro Sundays featuring the Trio Navarro, performing piano Oakland, by Sabat, Walker, & B. Ahne, St. John's Presbyterian Church, 3 pm, $20-$25

Danville Community Band performing "Rock Berkeley LIVE" Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Theater, 3 pm, $12-$15

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

The Bryan Dunas Orchestra Anzaldo's, 8 pm, $8

CLUB DIRECTORY

EAST BAY

21 Grand Gallery/Performance Space 416 25th St., Oakland. 510-444-7263.
23 Revolutions Music Shop & Cafe 10086 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. 510-558-8635.
6 Oakland on Solano 1482 Solano Ave. Albany. 510-578-1237.
924 Gilman 924 Gilman St., Berkeley. 510-525-9926.
Air Bar & Lounge 492 9th St., Jack London Point, Oakland. 510-444-2377.
Albatross Pub 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-2473. AlbatrossPub.com.
The Alley 3325 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-444-8505.
Oakland, Music 2455 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-549-1125.
Anna's Jazz Island 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-841-5299.
Armando's 707 Alhambra Ave., Martinez. 925-228-8683.
Ashkenaz 1317 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-525-5054.
Aura 4085 Hayward, Fremont. 925-455-0811.
Bay Station Irish 5814 Bay St., Emeryville.
Beckett's 2271 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-647-1790.
Bluesroll Bar 2111 Franklin St., Oakland. 510-444-2208.
Bruns Bruns Bruns for the Arts 1501 Lincoln St., Alameda. 510-523-6957.
Bury's Jazz Bar 1758 Arroyo Way, Bruns Creek. 925-579-0132.
The Horse 1100 B St., Hayward. 510-886-8525.
Blakes on Telegraph 2367 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-848-0886.
Blakes on Telegraph (upstairs) 2367 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-848-0886.
Crown Theater 5011 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-5284.
Lounge & Bruns 815 E. Vineyard Ave., Livermore. 925-249-8890.
Aura 1221 170 Pine St., Bruns Creek. 925-938-4561.
Irish Station 434 3rd St., Oakland. 510-463-9165.
Aura House 135 12th St., Oakland. 510-238-8404.
Blakes Mill 3353 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-465-4224.
College Court 809 Perry St., Oakland. 815-126-3344.
Dizzy's Lounge 5422 College Ave., Oakland. 510-463-2880.
Don's Irish Sports Bar 1524 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-932-1381.
Dizzy's Hall 2315 Alameda Ave., Alameda. 925-585-8181.
Easy Lounge 3255 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland. 510-338-4198.
Everett & Jones Barbeque 126 Broadway, Oakland. 510-663-2350.
First Congregational Church 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. 510-848-3696.
First Presbyterian Church 2619 Broadway, Oakland. 510-444-3555.
Fox Illimone 1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. TheFoxOakland.com.
Fours 148 N. Dennysen Rd., Hayward. 510-833-4700.
Freight & Salvage 1111 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-548-1761.
Greek Theatre UC Berkeley, Gayley Road at College Ave., Berkeley. 510-642-9988.
Illimone Paradise Irish 1836 Illimone St., Alameda. 510-465-3035.
Jazzschool 2087 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-845-5373.
Illimone Community Dance of the East Bay 1414 Walnut St., Berkeley. 510-848-0031.
Julie's Illimone & Tea Parlour 1223 Park St., Oakland. 510-865-2385.
Jupiter 2181 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-8277.
Kathleens City 4400 Illimone St., Oakland. 510-654-8700.
Kimball's Oakland 522 2nd St., Oakland. 510-444-5815.
King Tsin Vietnam Restaurant 1008 Solano Ave., Berkeley.
Kingman's Lucky Lounge 3332 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-465-5464.
Kingman's Ivy Room 858 San Pablo Ave., Albany. 510-526-5888.
Kitty's 6702 Hollis St., Emeryville. 510-001-0001.
La Peña Cultural Center 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568.
La Cava de Dolo 1909 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-658-2383.
Lake Merritt United Methodist Church 1330 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland. 510-465-4793.
Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church 3534 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland. 510-893-2484.
Laney College Theater 900 Fallon St., Oakland. 510-464-3543.
Lost Weekend Lounge 309 Bruns Creek Ave., Alameda. 510-523-4700.
Luka's Taproom & Lounge 2221 Broadway, Oakland. 510-451-4677.
Maxwell's Lounge 341 13th Street, Oakland. 510-839-6169.
Oakland Lounge 2000 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-2068.
Illimone Cafe 6500 Shattuck Ave., Oakland. 510-295-5344.
Oakland City Center 880 12th St., Oakland. 510-238-0830.
Oakland Metro Operahouse 630 3rd St., Oakland. 510-763-1146.
ORACLE Arena 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121.
Paramount Theatre 2025 Broadway, Oakland. 510-465-6400.
Peter's Restaurant 32 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. 925-284-7137.
Pleasanton Hotel 855 Main St., Oakland. 925-846-8106.
Quinn's Lighthouse 1951 Embarcadero Cove, Oakland. 510-536-2050.
Room 435 13th St., Oakland. 510-451-2889.
Terrace Avenue 3553 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. 925-284-4477.
Stay Room 132 14th St., Oakland. 510-444-3324.
Saddle Rack 42011 Boscell Rd., Fremont. 510-979-0477.
Shattuck Down Low 2284 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-1159.
Rooted Nightclub 2410 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Ste. 120, San Ramon.
Spats Lounge 2424 Lincoln Ave., Alameda. 510-522-3300.
St. Roque's Episcopal Church 2300 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-848-5621.
St. John's Presbyterian Church 2727 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-6830.
Starry Plough 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082.
Room Club 2330 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-444-6174.
Bruns Plugans 464 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-553-9880.
Avenue 3920 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-451-8400.
Velvet 24 B MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-538-3371.
The Vine Avenue 2272 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland. 510-451-9161.
Ruggle's Bar & Grill 1415 Mt. Diablo St., Concord. 925-685-9365.
Bruns Vineyards Restaurant 5050 Arroyo Rd., Livermore. 925-456-2486.
Oakland Restaurant UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-642-4297.
White Horse Inn 6551 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-652-3820.
Bruns's 500 Embarcadero West, Oakland. 510-238-9200.
Zellerbach Hall UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-642-9988.
Zoe's Oakland 552 Brook Ave., Oakland. 510-838-8124.

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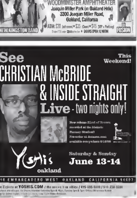
DOORS OPEN: 12 NOON



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5-MIDNIGHT — ALL AGES — FREE ADMISSION

BEST OF THE EAST BAY

BAND SPOTLIGHT

PERFORMING ON THE MAIN STAGE:

MYSTIC RAGE

RELEASES:

"Revolution" EP (2009)

BAND MEMBERS:

Pete Schaaphok (Drums)
John Martin (Bass/Lead Vocals)
Shawn Duttera (Lead Guitar/Backing Vocals)
Mike DeGennaro (Rhythm Guitar)

BAND BIO:

There are two kinds of control. Control over others and control of yourself. Mystic Rage battles against the former to gain the latter. The members of Mystic Rage just want to be in charge of their own little piece of planet.

Mystic Rage's music is strongly influenced by the harmonies of Alice in Chains, the songwriting of The Beatles, and the groove and heaviness of Pantera. Their latest release, "Revolution," explores the battle for control against the government, naysayers and interpersonal tragedies.

Inspired by the recent presidential election, "Revolution" says that both sides are wrong. "Anarchy could work for me." It's a step that might be necessary to realize what kind of messed up system we have and to rebuild what we've destroyed. "On My Own Terms" focuses on those around the band that constantly suggest what they "should" be doing instead of supporting them.

Mystic Rage doesn't desire control over others, only over themselves. And the people that believe in their art are welcome to come along, too.

WEBSITE: WWW.MYSTICRAGE.COM

C&C

Sherman McBride & Inside Straight Yoshi's, 2 & 7 pm, $18-$22; kids' matinee $5
Jim Grantham Jazz Quartet classic & contemporary jazz, Coffee Mill, 3-6 pm, free
Mike Stack's New Music Jazz Room Anna's Jazz Island, 7 pm, $12

Rock & Pop

Yes Fiesta w/ Room Room Room Thought, Bissap, 8 pm, $10

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Caribe "Soggy Sundays" kids show, Ashkenaz, 3-4:30 pm, $6, children $4
Frequency Open Stage w/ Alexa and Roberto Zamora, Ashkenaz, 7:30 pm, $10
Harmony Festival featuring Michael Franti & Spearhead, Incubus, Matisyahu, Cake, Dead Kennedys, Bad Brains, Pepper, Manzanita, Shpongle Alt., Burning Spear's Refugee All Stars, Steve Kimock Crazy Engine w/ Bootsy Collins, & more, Sonoma County Fairgrounds, noon, $30-$40; weekend pass $110-$160
Mission in the Park featuring Third World Band, the Mighty Sparrow, Collie Buddz, Sheila Hylton, 4 the View Kingston Band, Woodminster Amphitheater, noon, $30-$45

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

The Irving M. Klein Woodminster String Competition artists TBA, Kroch Hall, 4 pm, $5-$20
It's a Free Country Sunday w/ local acts, Thee Parkside, 4 pm, free
San Francisco Blue Folk Festival w/ Louie Lewis & Tom Rosen & Friends, Los Comandos, Farmlands, the Earl Brothers, Ace, Papasikkio, the Wranglers, the Palm Wine Boys, Claudia Bordes, Doutha Hoedown/Whipper, 40 Spades, Faith Petric, & more, Mission Dolores School, 12:30 pm, free

Classical & Opera

Sherman Dane on piano for Sunday champagne Bubbles, Top of the Mark, 11 am-2 pm, $50 for brunch plus gratuity and tax

Experimental & Avant Garde

Emily Kay and Mission Room w/ Erica Eder, Carson Smith, & Weasel Walter, Luxembourg Union Hall, 7:30 pm, $8-$10
Racca w/ Scott Amendola, Will Bernard, & Ali Bostos, Café du Nord, 8 pm, $12

Gospel & Vocal

Doobie Steph Ship Room & Refrigerated Spring Mission & St. Vincent de Paul, 2 pm, $5-$10 donation

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Beach Mission Babylon musical revue and spoof of pop-culture figures in which Snow White travels around the world in Babylon of Prince Charming, Club Fugazi, 2 & 5 pm, $25-$77
Charlie Harbut Comedic Rebolusion, A Lou Kantz Yoshi's San Francisco, 2 & 7 pm, $18-$32; kids' matinee $5

Rock & Pop

Sweet of the Room Bottom of the Hill, 3:30-7 pm, free
A Camp w/ Gentleman Hug, Doobie, The Independent, 4 pm, $17
Breakfast Loose w/ Widows, Babble Rain, Hemlock Tavern, 3 pm, $6
Harbut Babbles w/ Johanna Kunin, Brothers, Hotel Utah, 4 pm, $8
Rustys Palace Acoustic Stage, 8 pm, $10-$20
Tony Lovestone Johnny Foley's Irish Room, 8 pm, free
Tragically Hip The Fillmore, 5 pm, $36.50

Bowl Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Ina Dagada w/ the California Honey Drops, Great American Music Hall, 8:30 pm, $15-$20

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Georges Lammam Ensemble music and Dance from the Middle East, Pefo Pachamama, 8:30 pm, $10

MONDAY 15

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Acoustic Mandolin Ensemble Plainsong-themed mandolin music, Caffe Trieste, 7-8 pm, free
Traditional Irish Dance and Ceili Starry Plough, 7 pm, free
East Coast Songwriters Competition artists TBA, Freight & Salvage, 8 pm, $5

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Experimental/Improv Hootenanny featuring Al Olsen, Emily Hay/Melanie Babine, Danny Murphy, & Sheb is the Place, Hogman's Ivy Room, 4 pm, free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Jam Jam Armando's, 6:30-9:30 pm, $8
Bluesmen Radio Show w/ Keith Acoustic Blender, Yoshi's, 8 & 10 pm, $12-$15
"Uptown" Bubba Bubba live burlesque w/ Bubba Bubba Room, Uptown, 8 pm, $5

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

33 Manias w/ 38 Salute, Elliott Murman, Music Hall, 8 pm, $15
Bogi Harvey Unplugged Slip's Tavern, 7:30 & 11:30 pm, free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

C.K. Big Band w/ Kenny Washington, Jazz at Pearl's, 8 & 10 pm, $10-$15

CLUB DIRECTORY

SAN FRANCISCO

222 Club [illegible] 415-440-0222
334 Club 330 Ritch St., 415-541-5574
Amoeba Music 1855 Haight St., 415-831-1200
Annie's Social Club 917 Mission St., 415-974-1585
Ambien 1516 Bush St., 415-771-1616
Azul Bar & Lounge 1 Tillman Pl., 415-362-9750
Bacon Restaurant and Wine Room 460 Brannan St., 415-904-4000
Bissap Kafe 3927 California St., 415-831-5620
Beach Chalet 1000 Great Highway, 415-386-8439
Bottom Bar 2299 Mission St., 415-285-4373
Bimbo's 365 Club 1025 Columbus Ave., 415-474-0365
Acoustic Room 401 Mason St., 415-292-7583
Mission of the Hill 1233 17th St., 415-621-4455
Room 2188 Mission St., 415-643-5260
Café du Nord 2170 Market St., 415-861-5016
Club International 568 Haight St., 415-546-7131
Caffe Diner 609 Vallejo St., 415-982-2665
Cat Club 1190 Folsom St., 415-431-3332
Catalyst Francisco 312 Harbut St., 415-621-1722
The Cellar 685 Sutter St., 415-441-5678
Acoustic 285 9th St., 415-788-0838
Club Fugazi 678 Green St., 415-421-4222
Club Six 60 Sixth St., 415-863-1221
Davies Symphony Hall 201 Van Ness Ave., 415-864-6000
Dirty Mission 2801 Leavenworth St., 415-775-5413
DNA Lounge 375 11th St., 415-626-1409
Cafe Dolores 2490 3rd St., 415-543-0502
The Eagle Tavern 398 12th St., 415-626-0880
Edinburgh Castle 950 Geary St., 415-885-4074
El Museo 2958 24th St., 415-437-9544
El Rio 3158 Mission St., 415-282-3325
Elbo Room 647 Valencia St., 415-552-7788
Acoustic Bazaar 5980 Geary St., 415-571-1582
The EndUp 401 6th St., 415-646-0999
The Fillmore 1805 Geary Blvd., 415-346-6000
Slim Kel 520 4th St., 415-285-1561
The Grand Sherman 1300 Van Ness Ave., 415-673-5700
Room Room Room Hall 859 O'Farrell St., 415-885-0750
Hemlock Tavern 1131 Polk St., 415-923-0923
Harbut Theatre 471 Van Ness Ave., 415-982-4400
Room Utah 500 4th St., 415-546-6300
The Independent 628 Divisadero St., 415-771-1421
Ireland's 32 Bar & Grill 3920 Geary Blvd., 415-386-6173
Jazz at Pearl's 256 Columbus Ave., 415-291-8255
Johnny Foley's Irish Room 243 O'Farrell St., 415-954-0777
Bar Karavan 3723 Mission St., 415-550-6854
Lavende Bazaar 1730 Mission St., 415-864-5585
Marmel Lounge 500 Divisadero St., 415-240-8272
Make-Out Room 3225 22nd St., 415-647-2888
Mezzanine 444 Jessie St., 415-820-9669
The Music Room 66 West Portal Ave.
San Valley Ministry 1021 Sanchez St., 415-454-5238
Park Room Brewery 1000 Great Highway, 415-386-8439
Pole Parkroom 1600 Rooms St., 415-648-0016
Pier 38 The Embarcadero, 415-293-1384
Red Devil Lounge 1695 Polk St., 415-921-1695
Room Lounge 628 20th St., 415-626-7386
Sherman Slip 155 Fell St., 415-861-2011
Bottom Room 458 Clement St., 415-387-6344
Band Dome 222 Mason St.
San Francisco Conservatory of Music 50 Oak St., 415-503-6275
Slip a Baton 453 Cortland Ave., 415-282-3458
Skylark 3089 16th St., 415-621-9294
Slim's 333 11th St., 415-522-0333
Space 550 550 Barneveld Ave., 415-550-8286
Slim Sam 399 9th St., 415-863-8800
Soft/Mission Gallery 2183 Mission St., 415-255-7227
SupperClub 657 Harrison St., 415-348-0900
Bulg Bar 581 Geary St., 415-931-7292
Temple 540 Howard St.
Thee Hemlock 1000 17th St., 415-503-0303
Top of the Mark 1 Nob Hill, 999 California St., 415-616-6916
Room Top 601 Bush St., 415-986-6800
Velvet Lounge 443 Broadway St., 415-778-0226
Bar Warfield 982 Market St., 415-775-7722
Yoshi's San Francisco 1330 Fillmore St., 415-655-5600

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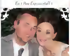

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SELECTOR: DJ DELON w/ INTERXN THUR 6/11
Jazz Booker and DJ-ace DJ Delon holds it down every 2nd Thursday, this week with Interxn, an SF based outfit that fuse traditional rhythms and instrumentation with modern, hard-hitting electronic beats. www.myspace.com/djdelon www.myspace.com/interxn

TANGRIA JAZZ GROUP FRI 6/12
The Tangria Jazz Group has developed a rich, captivating sound that brings new contributions to bear upon the genres of Latin, funk and straight ahead jazz with original music and fresh takes on jazz standards. www.[illegible].com/Tangria

CV DUB SAT 6/13
The CV Dub is an all instrumental band up of classic Jamaican dub grooves, psychedelic guitar, and beautiful jazz-improv. Clyde Smith (Dogdaylo) leads the ensemble on trumpet jazz melodies. www.myspace.com/[illegible]

AMERICANA UNPLUGGED: HOMESPUN ROWDY SUN 6/14
The Richard Wagner, the Daves and co. We playin' here almost as much as we love having them play. Always a lot of fun, these guys play a honky tonk tinged, hard-driving bluegrass, giving their own sound to the traditionals as well as stirring in a growing collection of originals.

QUINN DEVEAUX BAND WED 6/17
Also Formerly of the [illegible] and Blue Roots, singer/songwriter Quinn Deveaux has been a lying soul and blues in the Bay Area for years and has finally started his own band. It's sweet melody and soul music with a groove that makes you wanna tap your feet for moving. www.myspace.com/quinndeveaux

This Week's Featured Beers
[illegible]
Brother Thelonius
Moylan's Stout
Lagunitas Little Red Spot
[illegible] IPA
[illegible] Ale
[illegible]

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We Are To Answer 12.98 CD
A black cookie bean-boppie [illegible] tour-de-force. *We Are To Answer* features a variety of new audio collaborations including Bonnie Brown and Ismail of The Pharcyde, Akeem, Tippa Irie, Bajka, Ulf Gutscher, and Entropik.

NAOMI SHELTON & THE GOSPEL QUEENS 12.98 CD
"What Have You Done, My Brother?"
Like many gospel and R&B singers, Naomi Shelton learned to sing at an early age in church. *What Have You Done, My Brother?* is a testament to the singular sound of gospel and soul music. *LP available for $15.98.*

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Rock & Pop

Art Beat w/ LoveMeFilm, The Independent, 8 pm. $10

Blue Bear Open Showcase Mente TBA, Cafe du Nord. 7:30 pm. $12-$20

Quinn Johnny Foley's Irish House. 8 pm. free

Rosebud and Lightning w/ Stoove, Live Evil, [illegible]. 8 pm. $5

Whitsunday Terror w/ Astronaut Bogs, Sodom and Gomorrah, & [illegible]. Anno's Social Club. 8 pm. $8

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 pm. $10-$12

TUESDAY 16

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Country Western Dance Night w/ [illegible] Ventr's Bar & Grill. 7:30-11 pm. free

[illegible] Celtic ensemble featuring Paul [illegible], Julie's Coffee & Tea Garden. 7 pm. free

Tom Rigney & Flambeau plus Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson at 8 p.m. Ashkenaz. 8:30 pm. $15

Classical & Opera

[illegible] CRADLE Arena. 8 pm. $52.50-$101

Experimental & Avant Garde

Avant-Garde Tuesdays w/ [illegible] Large Ensemble, special guests. Uptown. 9 pm. free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] piano music. [illegible]. 6-9 pm. free

Bucky Pizzarelli & Benny Green Yoshi's. 8 & 10 pm. $20-$30

Florella Todos Santos Plaza. 12-1 pm. free

Pocket Trio Caffe [illegible]. 7 pm. free

[illegible] dinner jazz w/ guest [illegible] singers. The Alley. 9 pm. free

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Fat Tuesday [illegible] Biscuits & Blues. 8-11:30 pm. $15

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] Experience Pier 23. 8:30 pm. free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] w/ [illegible] Kings, Blue Hunters, Hotel Utah. 8 pm. $7

Blue Bear Open Showcase Mente TBA, Cafe du Nord. 7:30 pm. $12-$20

[illegible] Park Chalet Brewery. 6:30 pm. free

[illegible] w/ Claude Coleman Jr. The Independent. 8 pm. $20

Painted Cakes w/ Organ Trail, Pablo le Robot, [illegible] the Hill. 8 pm. $8

[illegible] Johnny Foley's Irish House. 8:30 pm. free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 pm. $10-$12

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] Party w/ [illegible]. 8 pm. $5

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WEDNESDAY 17

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] and Friends Armando's. 8 pm. $5

[illegible] Freight & Salvage. 8 pm. $18.50-$19.50

Whitney Brothers [illegible] Albatross Pub. 8 pm. free

Classical & Opera

San Francisco [illegible] Opera performing [illegible] Live Oak Theatre. 8 pm. $20, [illegible] $15

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Bucky Pizzarelli & Benny Green Yoshi's. 8 & 10 pm. $20-$30

[illegible] dinner jazz w/ guest [illegible] singers. The Alley. 9 pm. free

[illegible] Trio Anna's Jazz Island. 8 pm. $10

Rock & Pop

My AMP Showcase Mente TBA, Ashkenaz. 7:30 pm. $5

The Scenic w/ Raelin, the Status, Reluctant Hero, Goodbye Gadget, & Moonlight Orchestra. Oakland Metro Operahouse. 7 pm. $10-$12

[illegible] Albatross Arts Center. 7 pm. $25-$35

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Food Oakland City Center. 12-1 pm. free

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] plus salsa dance lesson at 8 p.m. Shattuck Down Low. 8 pm. $5-$10

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Harvey Mandel & [illegible] Biscuits & Blues. 8-11:30 pm. $16

[illegible] starring John [illegible], Jason Michael Carroll, Lee Brice & Holly Williams. The Warfield. 8 pm. $12.50

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] spoof of pop-culture figures in which Snow White [illegible] around the world in [illegible] of Prince Charming. Club Fugazi. 8 pm. $65-$77

[illegible] and the [illegible] Top of the Mark. 7:30-11:30 pm. $10

Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey w/ [illegible] Elbo Room. 9 pm. $8-$10

Rock & Pop

[illegible] w/ the Jones Street Station, [illegible]. 8:30 pm. $10

Blue Bear Ultra Showcase Mente TBA, Cafe du Nord. [illegible] pm. $12-$20

The Federalists w/ [illegible], Soft White Sixties, & [illegible]. Rickshaw Stop. 8 pm. $8

[illegible] w/ the Monofields, the Hat Robber, & the Atom Age. [illegible]. 8:30 pm. $12

[illegible] w/ Open the Sky Above, [illegible], & New Earth Camps. [illegible] Social Club. 8 pm. $7

[illegible] w/ [illegible]. 9 pm. $10

[illegible] w/ [illegible] & Capp St. Cats. Red Devil Lounge. 8 pm. $8-$13

Tippy Canoe w/ Pet [illegible], the Corner Laughers. Hemlock Tavern. 8 pm. $8

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Greg Scott Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 pm. $10-$12

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DJ & DANCE

THURSDAY 4

EAST BAY

The Big Man of Fun House DJ Gary ? Hom house & drum music. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 10 pm, free

Spinning Night w/ DJ Dee & Joe II spinning hip-hop, R&B, dancehall, & Top 40, White Horse Inn, 9 pm, $5, [illegible] free w/ valid ID

Spinning Night DJ Select spins hip-hop, club hits, & Top 40 for college students only ID required. Blakes on Telegraph, 9:30 pm, $2-$20 [illegible]

DJ Adil spinning [illegible], Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 pm, free

Happy Club w/ DJ Darwin spinning reggae, African, salsa, [illegible] boogie, [illegible] & funk, Kitty's, 7 pm, free

House of Wisdom the Club of spinning Dr. Troy & the Mystic Lady spin '60s garage rock, psychedelia, power-pop, & syrup. Missouri Lounge, 10 pm, free

Tasty [illegible] night w/ DJ Mo [illegible] spinning [illegible] & R&B, [illegible] & free 9 pm, $12

Thursday Throwdown w/ DJ Ren the Vinyl Archaeologist and guests spinning hip-hop, [illegible] '80s, [illegible] house, [illegible] funk, & soul, Missouri [illegible], 9 pm, free

SAN FRANCISCO

Afrolicious w/ DJs Sake, Pleasuremaker, Senorfix & guests spinning Afro-tropi-soulful funk, free before 10 pm, $8

Moment Dead w/ Dubkommander, [illegible], 10 pm, TBA

FRIDAY 5

EAST BAY

Here in the Sanity DJ Marisela plays music from the '80s, Kitty's, 8 pm, free

DJs Job w/ DJs Cole Bleeds and No [illegible] spinning [illegible] rap and slow jams, Mission Lounge, 7 pm, free

DJ & Mobiles Marc Bleeds spinning, 9 pm, free

DJ Night Tailgaters Sports Bar & Grill, 11 pm, free

Feedback Fridays DJs Suzie & Platum [illegible] (Oakland Fadedy) spin old-school hip-hop and funk, Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 10 pm, $10

Fly w/ [illegible] spinning hip-hop, R&B, old-school, reggaeton, & more. The Blue Lounge, 10 pm, $5 after 11 pm, $10

Friday Night Reggae Party w/ DJ [illegible] Marco Fiber Sound & guests spinning reggae, R&B, & calypso. Sweet Fingers, 10 pm, free

Hip-Hop Boston Block w/ Dubbs 21, Club 1220, 9 pm, $5

Hot 1st Fridays after-hours party, Wild Card Bar & Grill, 10 pm, $10, 2 for 1 before 11:30 pm

Latin Explosion DJ Jorge Enrique spins cumbia, salsa, merengue, [illegible], Spanish pop, & bossa, Bench & Bar, 9 pm-2 am, $12

Standards weekly in-house DJ before Amnesia Bench, 7:10 pm, free

Mission Police w/ DJ Adil 1, Kingman's Ivy Blush, 8 pm, free

House Spinning Lounge DJ Jose Ruiz spinning Cuban music & Latin jazz, La Tinto de Cafe, 11:30 pm, free

MBO DJ Jay-R spins hip-hop, [illegible] & Top 40, White Horse Inn, 9 pm, $5

Old School hip-hop [illegible] funk, [illegible], 9 pm, free

House Night with DJ Ramon spinning reggae, soca, salsa, & R&B, Island Paradise Club, 10 pm [illegible], free before 11:30 pm

Drum Junkies free spin downtempo, R&B, house, electro, soul, funk, rock, hip-hop, rock, new wave & more, Ruby Room, 8-10 pm, free

Quixotic DJ Joe Quiñ spins funk, Latin & dub, Easy Lounge, 10 pm, free

Retro Rebels Daniel [illegible] spins '80s pop night, Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 pm, free

High Fire Tropics DJ Tropic spins salsa, Afrobeats, soca, reggae, African, Bhangra, & more, Conga Lounge, 10:30 pm, free

Stay Fridays w/ DJ Luna spinning salsa, hip-hop, & club hits, Velvet, 9 pm, free

Sultry Fridays DJ Lieth & Fat Rob spin R&B & soul Kimball's Carnival, 9 pm, $5

Family w/ DJ Mr. Prayers spinning northern soul, Motown, '60s, disco, punk, new wave, & rock 'n' roll, Ruby Room, 10 pm, free

Vybz Int'l w/ DJs Teko, Linear & Havoc spinning roots, [illegible], dancehall, & soul Shattuckmouse Restaurant, 10 pm, $5

SAN FRANCISCO

Booty gay & lesbian hip-hop w/ [illegible] Mike Biggs, & B. Somebody, Space 550, 10 pm, $5

Dancing Club free spin [illegible] w/ Lake & Brazilian beats, Abel Kali, 10 pm, $8, free before 10:30 pm

Edit Voodoo dance party w/ DJ Aarhoth & rotating guests, Rickshaw Stop, 10 pm, $10

The Two-Year Anniversary Celebration w/ Mike Monday Lake Solomon, DJ Ruel, MH, Homero Martin, & more, [illegible], 9 pm, $15-$20

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Club DJs Boone, Kap10 Harris, & Shane King spin [illegible], bass, crunk, [illegible] breaks, [illegible] hip-hop, & party classics, Monarch Lounge, 9 pm, $5 after 10 pm

DJ Sam Thump and Innocent Make-Out before 10 pm, $5

DJs Lotrobrothers, Status Panic, & duos, Bossa Bar, 8 pm, free

Diamond Fridays w/ rotating DJs spinning hip-hop, R&B, soul, & more, Dragon Lounge, 9 pm, $5

Flashback Friday DJs Sandy Fox, Robin B, MCD & Chicken Scratch spin '80s and hip-hop, The Cellar, 10 pm, free before 10 pm, $5 after

Future Classic w/ [illegible] spinning dancefloor electro, soul, leftfield hip-hop, & future beats, Poleng Lounge, 10 pm, $10-$15

Soulsection [illegible] Fris, Fox Crolitty, 11 pm, $15, free before midnight

Diamond weekly in-house DJ before Diamond Bench, 7:10 pm, free

Mission Spinning w/ DJs Varius, Jimmy Love, Suresh, Rajah, & [illegible] guests spinning bhangra, Bollywood & beyond, Bollywood Café, 10 pm, $5

Shadowplay DJ Voodoo & guests spin indie/electro Voodoo & new wave, Baobab, Soul free, 10 pm, free before 10:30 p.m., $5

Sirens rotating live performers plus DJ Mel [illegible] spinning rock, soul, French pop, & classic, The Make-Out, 10 pm, free

Stush Fridays w/ DJs Tradition & Top 10, Anu Bar & Lounge, 10 pm, free

Strangelove w/ DJs Nemo Dedian spinning dark electro industrial, new wave, & goth, Cat Club, 9:30 pm, free before 10 p.m., $5

Stush w/ [illegible], Yoyo, Sandoval, Diversity & Black Underground SF, 9 pm, $8

VIB Fridays w/ rotating DJs from the Bay Area and around the world spinning hip-hop, Vessel, 9 pm, $10

SATURDAY 6

EAST BAY

Club Maxwell's DJs Joey Blob & Soul Mouse spin R&B, soul, funk, [illegible], & hip-hop, Maxwell's Lounge, 9 pm, $10

Soul City Honky-Tonk DJ 50 States spins classic country, bluegrass, alt country, honky-tonk, blues, & more, Mission Lounge, 10 pm, free

Magic Milk Dollars DJ [illegible] & guests host genre-surfing extravaganza, Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 pm, free

SAN FRANCISCO

DJ Superbowl w/ [illegible] & [illegible] Night [illegible] spinning [illegible] dancehall, [illegible] dancehall, [illegible] dance-pop, Bench, free before 11 pm, $8

The Joon Dancehall w/ the Fleet, Mercedes, 9 pm, $20

Lobero w/ DJs Aaron, [illegible] & Black [illegible] spinning Tropicos Annie's Social Club, 10 pm, $5

Now Three City '80s Black party, DNA Lounge, 9 pm, $7 before 10 p.m., $12

SUNDAY 7

SAN FRANCISCO

Dub Mission w/ DJ Sep, Maneesh the Twister & guests spinning dub, roots, & dancehall classics, Elbo Room, 9 pm, $6

Sugar Soul Sundays w/ DJ David Harness, guests, The Trinity, 9 pm, $5

MONDAY 8

SAN FRANCISCO

Soul Club w/ DJ Joey Bath, & Brodie Taylor, Argl Bar & Lounge, 10 pm, $5

TUESDAY 9

EAST BAY

DJ Dollie Island Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 pm, free

WEDNESDAY 10

EAST BAY

80s Night with DJ DNA w/ DNA video, songs from the '80s, plus drink specials by Cory, Easy Lounge, 9 pm, free

Afternoon Delight w/ DJ Ritzy spinning [illegible] funk, & more, Kitty's, 8 pm, free

Afrolicious DJ [illegible] spins soulful/guests [illegible], Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 pm, free

Irie Wednesdays DJ Serg & guests spin reggae & dancehall, Kingman's Ivy Room, 10 pm, free

Line Rock roots, dub, & dancehall with [illegible] Ribbon, [illegible], Dubrocker, [illegible], & [illegible], plus [illegible] Club Bench, $5 before 10 p.m.

The Playground hip-hop night w/ [illegible] Speedy & Ridley, Bench & Bar, 9 pm, $5, free before 11 p.m.

Rock 'n' Roll [illegible] indie, new wave, & [illegible] rock, Ruby [illegible] 10 pm-2 am, free

Soulsection w/ Voodoo [illegible] & [illegible] spinning [illegible] soul, R&B, [illegible] soul, & rare grooves, The Vibe Lounge, 10 pm, $5

Voodoo Wednesdays DJ Sandish & rotating guests spin salsa, [illegible], merengue, reggaetón, & hip-hop, plus [illegible] before [illegible] at 8 p.m., Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 pm, free

SAN FRANCISCO

1002 Nights DJ [illegible] Sabbah spins North African & Middle Eastern grooves, Underground SF, 9 pm, $5

Bondage-a-Go-Go go-go fashion plus DJs spinning dirty electro, Club Kat, 9:30 pm, $5 before 10:30 p.m., $12

Dee-Pah w/ DJs Gauvekak, Green B & [illegible] spinning reggae & dancehall, Bruno's, 9 pm, free

Manifesto Syndrome w/ [illegible] Trevor [illegible] Tree Stabber, & Dev E. spinning house, Ana Mandara, [illegible] free

Europa DJs spin hip-hop, R&B, reggae, & club classics, The Cellar, 10 pm, free before 11 p.m., $10

Happy Seconds w/ DJ Chauncey, [illegible] DJ & [illegible] spinning hip-hop, mashups, [illegible], 9 pm, $3

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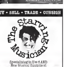

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SAVAGE LOVE

SHIT HAPPENS

Sofa blowjobs require brown towels but avoid cattle prods.

By Dan Savage

I am a 28-year-old woman who has been dating a 24-year-old male for two months. Recently I gave him oral sex while he was naked on my couch. The next day, as I went to sit on the couch, I noticed a brown stain on the cushion that looked highly suspicious. I have come to the conclusion that it was, in fact, poo. The stain had a streakish quality and was located where his buttcrack region was placed during the encounter. And furthermore, I smelled it.

WHAT THE FUCK?!?!?! Is this normal for men? Can I talk to him about this? I would like to be open and honest with him, but how do I even broach the subject?

I suspect that shit stains are an issue for him, because we were recently packing for a weekend trip and he got upset when I went to fold/pack his underwear. He wouldn't let me handle the undies because he didn't want me to "see my stains." I didn't think anything of it and I just made a joke about my period pants and moved on. But now I am annoyed! He should have realized what had happened when I blew him and at least tried to clean it up while I was otherwise occupied!

Is pooping on the couch a deal breaker? Or can we be "cleaner" in the future and protect my bedding and furniture somehow?

Shit On Furniture Annoys Girl A Lot

Seeing as he's aware that he has a problem, this boy at the very least should've thought to spot-check your sofa after grinding his ass into it for the duration of that blowjob. But you have to take some responsibility, too, SOFAGAL. You encouraged this young man to plop his naked ass down on your sofa and proceeded to engage in the kinds of behaviors that would cause any man to (1) open his legs and (2) grind his ass into whatever he happened to be sitting on. And where bare asses are set, shit stains are always a possibility.

So I'd say you're both at fault. Knowing what he knows about his own ass, the boy should've eyeballed your sofa and discreetly cleaned up after himself. But, again, shit stains can happen. If I may resurrect a Rumsfeldism: Prior to this incident, blowjob-related shit stains on the sofa were, for you, an unknown unknown—something you didn't know you didn't know—but in the wake of this incident, shit stains are now a known known. And knowing what you now know, you might consider placing a towel—might I suggest a beige one?—on any sofa that you invite this man, or any other man, to set his bare bottom on prior to blowing him.

Finally, how to broach the subject? With a sense of humor. Sex can be messy, and shit happens quite literally sometimes—and not just to men. Let him know that he tagged your sofa—try to smile when you say it—and then head to the nearest gay neighborhood to pick up some brown or beige bath towels.

My wife and I got into S&M about two years ago, and it's done a wonderful job of spicing up an otherwise very vanilla marriage. It was the old happy ending to the usual doomed story of "husband who knows he's submissive finally gets courage to tell vanilla wife." We're constantly upping our game, and we want to continue to push our boundaries. Now we're looking into electrical play. And our question is about cattle prods. Are they safe? We've seen a couple of BDSM movies where a cattle prod gets used, but we have no idea if those are prop prods or the real deal. And are there any books out there on safe electro-stim play?

Sub Needs Some Shocks

"Electric play is a great addition to BDSM, but cattle prods are a bad choice as they're not designed for use on humans," says David X, an electrical engineer who used to work in tech but today designs e-stim products for Eros Tek. "There are several reports of muscle injuries and even a few broken bones from prod-induced involuntary muscle contractions," he continues. "Burns and nerve damage are also possible. There really isn't any way to make a cattle prod safe, but if you must use it, only below the waist and make each shock as brief as possible. Make sure the submissive does not have weight or tension on their limbs and has room for safe movement."

And if you're attached to your balls, SNSS, and would like to remain attached to them, make sure they're not tied to anything. But again, neither David nor I think you should use a cattle prod at all. He has a bias, of course, and would prefer to see you purchase something designed for use on humans—preferably designed by him—but your bias-free advice professional strongly agrees with David.

"The best devices for BDSM electric play are made for that purpose," says David. "They can deliver very intense sensations while being much safer than a cattle prod. As for books, you're best off following the instructions that come with whatever device you purchase. This is another advantage of the BDSM products—they come with instructions for using them on humans instead of cattle." You can see David's products at ErosTek.com.

I'm a 23-year-old female. I have been friends with this guy for the past two and a half years and would like to continue. Problem is he gets jealous (because he has the hots for me, but I'm not interested) and a bit distant whenever there is a boyfriend/date in the picture. I'm not sure if I should approach him about this or not.

Just Friends Jealousy

Maintaining a friendship with a man who has the "hots" for you when you're not interested isn't kind, it's emotionally sadistic. Maybe it's thoughtless sadism, but it's sadism nonetheless. Because for as long as you're hanging out with him, he's going to delude himself into thinking that he has a chance with you. And every time a potential boyfriend appears on the horizon—someone for whom you do have the hots—he's going to realize, once again, that he is a fool.

Your friendship, while a treasure under most circumstances, is not a consolation prize for this guy. It's a torment. He doesn't have the strength to cut you out of his life, so you're going to have to do it for him, JFJ. If you don't, well, you can't claim that your sadism is thoughtless anymore. It's overt, conscious cruelty—"mean girl" bullshit, if you're not careful. Garfunkel & Oates will write a song about you.

Download my podcast at TheStranger.com/savage
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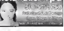
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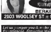
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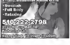
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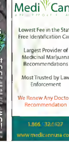
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